

The North American

Review

FOUNDED IN 1815

OLD SERIES: VOLUME 254

NUMBER 3

NEW SERIES: VOLUME 6

ARTICLES

Choosing Abundance	John Cage	9
The Dilemma of Public Television	Stephen Glauber	28
"Three from Illinois": The Producer	Scott Craig	32
"Three from Illinois": The Writer	Joseph Sander	33
Discovering Black Literature	John Lindberg	51

FICTION

If They Knew Yvonne	Andre Dubus	18
Snap	Ronald De Feo	38
Liza's Leaf Tower	Gail Godwin	41
Moved	Peter Owens	61
Madame Butterfly	Alyce Ingram	65

POETRY

Rosellen Brown, 1963, 27; Richard Jackson, *Distances*, 31; Philip Dacey, *The Lost*, 44; Philip Dow, *Do Not Puncture or Incinerate*, 56; William Ford, *At 4:47 in the Afternoon*, 58; Roger Mitchell, *Reading the News*, 59; Lawrence Swaim, *Death Is Always with Us*, 64.

DEPARTMENTS

Smalltalk: THE LUNACY IN THAT LUNAR TRIP, *Stephen Minot*, 2.
 American Eye: CITIES OF OHIO, *W. K. Woods*, 6.
 Kaul: TOWARD THE FIRST EMPTY BEER CAN IN OUTER SPACE, *Donald Kaul*, 8.
 Bias: SOME THOUGHTS ON READING FREDERICK R. BENSON'S WRITERS IN ARMS, *Leo J. Hertz*, 45; THE CONSPIRACY TO UNDERMINE THE FREAKS, *Bruce Niceswanger*, 48.
 The Living Underground: CHARLES BUKOWSKI, *Hugh Fox*, 57.

REVIEWS

By Peter Cooley, Keith McKean, Daniel J. Cahill, Patrick Brooks, Nora L. Magid, Robert Ward, George Glenn, Sylvia Finkelstein, Basheer K. Nijim, John Emory Van Domelen, 67.

Cover: "Abundance" hexagram, from the *I Ching*

Editor: ROBLEY WILSON, JR.

Business Manager: CHARLOTTE L. WILSON

Fiction: LOREE RACKSTRAW

Poetry: RICHARD RACKSTRAW

Books: EDWARD AMEND

Contributing Editors: ROBERT DANA, JAMES HEARST, DONALD KAUL, LAWRENCE SWAIM (WEST COAST), J. C. CEDERSTROM (SOUTH), STEPHEN MINOT (EAST COAST), NORA L. MAGID (NEW YORK CITY)

Publisher: UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

Editorial and Business offices: UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA, CEDAR FALLS, IOWA 50613

Rates: \$1.50 A COPY; \$6.00 A YEAR IN THE U.S AND ITS POSSESSIONS, \$6.15 IN CANADA AND LATIN AMERICA—ALL OTHER COUNTRIES \$7.00 A YEAR

THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, Fall 1969. Old Series Vol. 254, New Series Vol. VI; No. 3. Published quarterly in March, June, September, December, at the University of Northern Iowa, 1222 West 27th Street, Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613. Second class postage paid at Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613. Printed in the U.S.A. by Waverly Publishing Co., Waverly, Iowa 50677. Copyright © 1969 by the University of Northern Iowa. All rights, including translation into other languages, reserved. Opinions expressed by contributors to THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW do not necessarily reflect those of the editors or of the University of Northern Iowa. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by self-addressed envelope with return postage. THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW is indexed in SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES INDEX, HISTORICAL ABSTRACTS, and AMERICA: HISTORY AND LIFE. Back file volumes are available from AMS Reprint Co., 56 East 13th Street, New York, N. Y. 10003, and from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.

Subscribers must notify publisher of failure to receive within six weeks of date of issue.

THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW IS REVIVED WITH THE COOPERATION OF THE HONORABLE CLAIRBORNE PELL, SENATOR FROM RHODE ISLAND.

smalltalk

The Lunacy in that Lunar Trip

Our trip to the moon, President Nixon assures us, was the greatest event since the Creation. That's what he said. Greater, we must assume, than the ascensions of Moses and Jesus. "All the World's in the Moon's Grip" read the momentarily ecstatic *New York Times* on July 22. "For Most in U.S. a Day of Joy and Reverence." "Church attendance up." And on the 25th, "Champagne and Prayers Mark Apollo 11 Return."

Incredibly, this was the mood into which we were rocketed this summer. Such a rarefied atmosphere makes it difficult indeed to present a minority report. It would be far more acceptable to attack Christmas in December or to knock our Independence on the Fourth of July. "Nearly Everyone," the ad tells us, "reads the *Philadelphia Bulletin*." The picture shows hundreds of people happily absorbed in their newspapers while one bald-headed idiot wildly points to some immediate threat such as a tiger in the street. And why can't this loner, the ad suggests, also bury himself in the newspaper and forget that there are clear and present dangers?

In a desperate attempt to be a normal American citizen, I have turned to the *New York Times* of Friday, July 25, for guidance. Why did we go to the moon? Here are unrevised excerpts from some of the more helpful answers which appeared as ads in that issue.

WHY DO ANYTHING? Why sail Westward out of Renaissance Europe, at ruinous cost, and risk falling off the edge of the world? To see what's over there Why go to the moon, the planets, and the stars? To see what's out there For whenever and wherever man has gone looking before,

to see what was there, he has been right to do so. And he has never gone unrewarded.

LTV AEROSPACE CORP.

Have you maybe heard a neighbor ask "So What?" about walking on the moon? Some people think like that. If it costs a lot of money and they don't see an immediate payoff, it's a So-What? The soles of the boots you saw walk on the moon are made of GE silicone rubber. And the Saturn booster, the Apollo spacecraft, the lunar module and the Astronauts' space suits also used silicone rubber Sounds to us like the moon shot was a very smart investment Progress Is Our Most Important Product.

GENERAL ELECTRIC

We're proud to have shed a little light on the moon. We salute our moon heroes—and take pride in having played a small part in lighting the way.

REEVES INSTRUMENT DIV.
DYNAMICS CORP. OF AMERICA

Our eye is on the moon. An eye in the form of the lens system for the black and white TV camera for the Apollo 11 lunar landing Fairchild is an advanced technology corporation with a clear eye on the future.

FAIRCHILD CAMERA AND
INSTRUMENT CORP.

Today the Moon. Next week Mars . . . If men on Mars is our next goal, we, at Allen, hope we'll have something to do with getting them there.

ALLEN TOOL CORP.

THE QUESTERS: History's pages are illuminated with the names of men who journeyed into alien lands to make the unknown known. Marco Polo . . . Columbus . . . Magellan . . . Lewis and Clark . . . Peary . . . IBM salutes the astronauts . . . the people of NASA . . . and some 20,000 companies in the Apollo program who helped. We are proud to be one of them.

IBM

Thanks Neil, thanks Buzz, thanks Mike for letting us help give you the moon. ALL 3300 OF US TWA EMPLOYEES WORKING WITH NASA

"The Moon Belongs to Everyone." Thank you, Crew of Apollo Eleven, for bringing it so much closer to all of us.

THE CHASE MANHATTAN BANK

These corporate statements reflect accurately, I assume, the views of some 20,000 companies (by IBM's count) and many of their employees. They echo two out of the four possible arguments for shooting men into space. With self-restraint, I list them here as they are usually presented.

1. *Man the Discoverer.* We are living, this argument goes, in an age of discovery. We want to find, in the words of LTV Aerospace Corp., "a new world." We want to see "what's over there" and "what's out there." We are in the tradition of great explorers. And aren't we wonderful?

2. *The Money Argument.* We want to be entirely honest about this. The 20,000 companies in on this weren't taking deductions for charitable contributions. The free enterprise system thrives on activities like this. Think of the thousands of workers involved in these 20,000 plants. Where would those 3,300 men at TWA be if Neil, Buzz and Mike hadn't let them join the enterprise?

And it's not just workers who benefit. Don't forget that corporations in America are all publicly owned by stockholders—many of them widows and orphans.

3. *The National Image Argument.* This isn't for the general public. No one is crass enough to say (in print at least) things like "That'll show

those Commies who will sink whom!" The press has been very careful not to use those familiar phrases like "American leadership" and "The Free World." No editorial has suggested to the Uncommitted Nations that they get wise.

But those of us who are hard-headed realists shouldn't forget that the *National Image Argument*, or NIA to those in the know, was what JFK used to get NASA on the MAP. It's all very well for the *Times* to be talking about The Future of Man, but when Kennedy gave his Man-on-the-Moon-by-1970 speech, he was talking about Sputnik. Remember? We had been humiliated as a nation, and Jack countered with the pledge that although we'd lost the game, we'd win the series. And *that* was language which Congress and the voters understood. Never mind your Marco Polos and your Future of Man—just keep your eye on the scoreboard.

4. *The Circus Argument.* This necessarily has to be the least publicized of the four. But let's face it, every president regardless of his party affiliation has to be a practical leader, too. The fact is that nations have internal problems, and we've had more than our share lately. The violence of two summers ago reached the proportions in damage (though not in deaths) of the peasant revolts of Europe and the slave rebellions of Rome. And even the middle class is crying out for a new sense of "national unity" and "direction."

Now the times are not right for investing sizable portions of the gross national product in building cathedrals. Wars, on the other hand, are still acceptable and have traditionally helped to weld a nation together. But even though every reasonable step has been taken to present the NLF as a Major Threat to World Order and Peace, somehow they just don't come across like the Huns and the Axis of yesteryear. The war drags on as an Administrative albatross, an open debate which is far more divisive than unifying. They don't make wars like they used to.

And so with these points in mind, it is perfectly reasonable to give this

country something to think about, something to keep its eyes on, as the Fairchild Camera and Instrument Corp. put it. "Today the moon, next week Mars" the Allen Tool Corp. reminds us. Keep looking up, way up. And for those who missed that show, they'll be another in November—around election time.

It is with this in mind that our Administration has now announced, *ex cathedra*, that we will find life on another planet by the year 2000. That's only thirty years from now. Never mind your complaints about housing, schooling, jobs discrimination, death in rice paddies, leaking nerve gas, and overpopulation; let's all get behind our Sacred National Purpose of finding life on another planet. Anyone who objects either doesn't love his country or doesn't respect men like Columbus.

Sound as these arguments may appear when presented in the press and to school children across the country, I have certain reservations.

Man the Discoverer is the healthiest looking argument. It brings to mind our clean-living frontiersmen as well as those older (albeit foreign) heroes of our textbooks. Indeed, if we fail to place NASA in the glorious tradition of Marco Polo, Columbus, Magellan, Lewis and Clark, and Peary, IBM is quick to correct us.

But this analogy has all the stability of a Rube Goldberg invention. There is one simple fact with which IBM is perfectly familiar even if it and other corporations fail to mention it in their self-congratulatory ads: Placing two men on the moon cost American citizens \$800 for each man, woman, and child.

This figure, released by NBC on the night of July 20, takes the venture out of the Marco Polo-Columbus bracket altogether. Those were individual men raising moneys largely from private sources, the total of which never caused the slightest ripple in the economy.

The moon landing, on the other hand, was a governmental decision (we were *told*, never *asked*) involving extraordinary commitment of funds at a time when the frustrations of many citizens had reached the

level of open rebellion.

The national expenditure can be shrugged off by congressmen who are used to running an unending war. Statistics are easy to live with. But I am thinking of two families in Mississippi my wife and I have been helping. One consists of ten children and one adult, the other has eleven children and two adults. The government food-stamp program doesn't reach them because they, like thousands of others, do not have enough cash to buy stamps. If the expenditure for the moon program had been distributed directly on a per-person basis to *every* American family *without regard to need*, one of these families would have received aid over the ten-year period amounting to \$8,800 and the other \$10,400. In a very real sense, this is what they "paid" to put two men on the moon.

Marco Polo never asked or even dreamed of this kind of national subsidy. If Columbus had been able to tax the Spanish nation at this rate, he could have moved the entire city of Madrid to the New World block by block.

To offer even an approximate analogy, one would have to find a national commitment deep enough to touch every citizen financially over a span of a decade or longer, and one which would require the curtailment of other governmental programs. Not even the Parthenon had such an effect on individual citizens. And the medieval cathedrals were not governmental programs.

The only human enterprise which comes close to our moon trip was the building of the pyramids. And glorious as they were for Egypt, they were completed, as every school child knows, only through a barbaric disregard for human welfare.

So holy has our venture become, however, that criticism is almost considered impious. Would the good, gray, and impartial *Times* have accepted this ad?—

CONGRATULATIONS, NASA, on your unprecedented success in extracting \$800 from every man, woman, and child in America for a venture of doubtful value, and still maintaining your standing as this country's most popular gov-

ernmental agency. You have surpassed even the exploits of the Pharaohs!

Such an ad would, I suspect, be rejected not because it opposes governmental policy (the press has always been willing to take money for ads opposing the war in Vietnam), but because it attacks the image of the spacemen. It implies that no matter how courageous they were they are *not* in the tradition of Marco Polo, Columbus, and more recently our own lovable (and privately financed) Lindbergh; it implies, in fact, that they are only hardware in an enormous governmental program which was "sold" to the American public in one of the largest promotional programs in the history of this promotion-conscious nation.

Next comes the *Money Argument*. What's good for 20,000 corporations is good for America. Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way. Remember that space contracts are largely for applied research and development; they are not for production. For example, we learned from the *Times* (July 22) that "The Apollo astronauts scattered nearly \$1-million worth of tools, equipment, and plastic wrapping scraps on the moon." (No wonder the Allen Tool Corp. wants to be in on the Mars junket!) Hundreds of highly trained engineers were involved in designing, producing, and testing these items, but each was one-of-a-kind. There was no mass production. This applies to almost all of the equipment involved—from the rocket engine to the starched American flag.

So the \$4,000 which my own family paid for that evening of television entertainment did not help to hire a single unskilled worker. Our only consolation is that we did make the lives of this country's most highly skilled engineers and most savvy stockholders just a little more affluent. Such is the cost of show-biz today.

From a purely economic point of view, the space program is inferior to maintaining an unending war against any of a variety of small Asian nations. At least in that case the emphasis is on production of products which are promptly consumed either

by hostile fire or by friendly black markets. The "little guy" on the assembly line has a chance to profit too—until he is drafted.

"The Moon belongs to everyone," sings the Chase Manhattan Bank; but it doesn't have the nerve to add, "the best things in life are free." As the three pages of ads in the *Times* so dramatically demonstrate, the moon "belongs" in a solid, financial sense to 20,000 aggressive and prospering corporations. It is altogether fitting that Chase Manhattan thank the crew of Apollo Eleven for bringing the moon "so much closer to all of us." What they fail to point out is that "us" is a relatively small club.

It is interesting to observe how the Money Argument has paralyzed the natural caution of conservatives in both political parties. Imagine, by way of contrast, a congressman proposing that we spend \$800 for every man, woman, and child in order to achieve three goals in the next decade: a minimum wage, decent housing, and basic medical care for all. What is it about our thinking which makes such a proposal a "give-away program" and "dangerously inflationary," while spending the same amount to put two men on the moon is hailed by both parties as "a glorious chapter in our nation's history"?

The third justification is the *National Image Argument*. Jack Kennedy really believed this, and we must assume that the Congress which gave him the funds without national debate must have agreed. Why, then, did we abandon such a finely tuned argument as if it were expendable hardware to be left up there on the moon? Mainly because it has already served its purpose and now no longer reflects our image of the venture.

Admitting that this entire effort was ignited by the Soviet success in placing a satellite in orbit around the earth tends to cheapen our motives. It suggests that Apollo Eleven is simply the biggest show since Sputnik. How much grander it is to proclaim our flight as the greatest event since the Creation and "bury" (to borrow Krushchev's word) Sputnik with silent disdain.

Yet in spite of the willingness of the Nixon Administration to play Holy Ghost in the Great-Event Game, the fact remains that appropriations were made not for the Glorious Challenge to Mankind but strictly on the basis of national prestige and national "defense." It was not so much to stick our tongues out at the Russians as it was to seduce the uncommitted nations. And this still remains the motive as dynamic spokesmen for the Space Age like Mendel Rivers and Thomas Dodd begin rumbling for still further appropriations. ("We have no choice," Russell Long said to interviewers, but he didn't specify whether he meant Congress or the citizens.)

No one has asked the basic question about national image: Is love for a nation generated by sending men to the moon? For example, was Governor Rockefeller's trip to South America smoothed by our achievements in space? Did he find our Latin American neighbors awed into respectful silence by our proven technical knowhow and our willingness to spend more to get a man to the moon than the Soviet Union? Ask him.

Or think of it this way: If an African nation has to weigh a program of agricultural and technical assistance from the Soviets against a U.S.I.S. movie about the U.S. exploits on the moon, where will his future loyalty lie? President Nixon plans to give moon rocks to every head of state, but will he also remind them that the gift was paid for by the cuts in foreign aid?

There will come a time—perhaps within a year—when the Soviets will also land, and eventually the question of who got there first will fade. (Quickly now: which nation was first to the North Pole? Which to the South? Who came in second? What nations picked up "prestige" and which lost?)

What the historians will record, I suspect, is that as late as 1969 the major nations were still thinking primarily in 19th century terms: national identity held as the highest concern; national reputation still given a higher priority than human

welfare.

Finally, there is the *Circus Argument*, keeping the home front entertained. This is not a totally immoral suggestion. One of the explosive ingredients in Watts County, it was discovered, was boredom. Since then theaters have been added and a wide range of community programs: art classes, writing groups, drama troupes. A cultural vacuum is clearly a danger and a social crime as well.

But sending men to the moon and back does not meet human needs this way. It may cloak the fact that we have serious malnutrition in this country, that we have a higher rate of infant mortality than most of Europe, that we are the only industrial nation on earth suffering from periodic rebellions; but moon trips in no way meet those needs. And pushing on to Mars will bring us still further from where our real challenges lie.

Worse, space travel at this particular point in history may well serve to aggravate our down-to-earth problems. Flaunting this and succeeding

billion-dollar journeys before a public which is desperate for jobs, housing, and schooling is about as dangerous (and callous) as the display of aristocratic games to the poor of Paris would have been in the 18th century. The "in" group then tended to isolate itself in walled estates; but NASA is *nouveau riche* and cannot help flaunting its wealth. There is no governmental agency (not even the FBI) which is more anxious to thrust itself into the homes (television), the schools (maps, pamphlets, books), and the good graces ("prayers welcome our heroes") of the American public. Not even sending a black and a Puerto Rican to the moon will make life easier for those who have to remain abandoned in decaying cities and rural slums. Increasingly, black America is becoming convinced that Congress is not concerned with them or their problems; increasingly NASA and its Congressional supporters appear to be the living proof. This new aristocracy is too young and too brash to see the dangers.

We have now proved that we can at enormous cost get to the moon and back. The next question is whether we can return as easily from the policies which made that trip possible. More fundamentally, can we shift the assumptions about national and human needs which lay behind that policy? It will become increasingly difficult as NASA cloaks itself in phrases like "man's challenge" and "human destiny."

A few courageous congressmen have proposed a new course: a set of priorities based on people, not national image. Whether they will be supported by voters remains to be seen. As the *Times* headline said, "All the World's in the Moon's Grip." Getting back to earth may seem less dramatic and it certainly will be psychologically more difficult than it was for our astronauts. But until we do, we will be spinning in a moral vacuum. There will be world enough and time for conquering space. For our age, however, the compelling challenge for man is man.

—Stephen Minot

THE POETS IN THIS ISSUE:

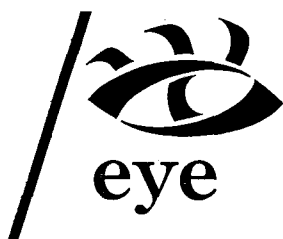
Rosellen Brown lives with husband and daughter in New York. Her poetry appears in *Poetry*, *Nation*, *Atlantic*, and this is her third appearance in the *NAR* In 1968, *Philip Dacey* won the Yankee Poetry Award; he studies and teaches in Iowa City, and has in the past taught as far west as Stanford and as far east as Eastern Nigeria (now Biafra) The poem by *Philip Dow* is from a new manuscript called *Wishbones*. He teaches at San Francisco State, and goes deer hunting in August *William Ford* is an ex-baseball player, just back from a year of study in France. No connection. His poems have appeared in *Plainsong* and *Southern Poetry Review* *Richard Jackson* is a student at Merrimack College; he made his first appearance here in our Spring issue *Lawrence Swaim*, our sometime West Coast editor, has been a frequent contributor of essays to these pages.

The editors of *The North American Review* are pleased and proud to note that this year's Lamont Poetry Selection is

A Probable Volume of Dreams
by Marvin Bell

published by Atheneum. Mr. Bell is a former poetry editor of the *Review*, and several of the poems in his award-winning book first appeared in our pages.

american



eye

Cities are news these days. Television, weekly magazines and even quarterly reviews offer regular coverage of America's urban crisis. In fact, one encounters a slogan like "urban crisis" so frequently through media that it becomes no more frightening than bad breath. Suddenly a byline story from Boston or Atlanta receives equal billing with an expose of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis's White House budget problems.

What stimulates this thirst for knowledge about Youngstown's school levy and New York's garbage strike? Is it man's natural attraction for disaster? After several summers of rioting, do people view cities like live volcanoes? Do they like to speculate about the smoke while they await new eruptions? Possibly Americans realize that their old cities suffer from a thousand symptoms that will bring gory deaths to these centers. Journalists keep watch to record a city's every whimper and scream.

Perhaps Americans wish to preserve an institution that appears to be dying. People started to glorify the West just as frontier life began to disappear. Buffalo Bill won acclaim for his road shows featuring cowboys and Indians at a time when Indians were forced onto reservations and the open range was a thing of the past. If old cities burn down or become empty shells, perhaps men like John Lindsay will emerge as the new Buffalo Bills. "Gotham John" could take his Fun City Show around to suburban shopping centers. Dazzled youngsters would get a taste of what life was like on the urban frontier. In several decades, ten year old boys may react to episodes about Mayor Daley and the students just as they respond to a Bat Masterson gun duel today.

It seems ironic that people grow fascinated with old inner cities at a time when technology makes tradi-

tional urban forms obsolete. As inventions eliminate those frictions, time and space, goods and services are no longer restricted by municipal boundaries. Cities begin to function as containers of poverty and blight. Cures for downtown areas will never evolve if planners continue to examine old Boston or old New York as isolated organisms that possess no connection with the rest of society. America exists as an urban nation in which its old cities play dependent rather than innovative roles. However, as international and national economic and social forces disperse those crucial functions once monopolized by downtown areas, a cultural lag persists concerning the city's role in history.

Here follows a series of rambling thoughts that were recorded this summer in Cincinnati, Shaker Heights, and Wilmington, Ohio. These notes indicate that even a Midwestern academician need no longer be immobilized by time and space.

* * *

For a few hours this June, circumstances removed me from a desk stacked with final exams. I found myself in the unfamiliar role of a greeter of dignitaries. Mayor Carl B. Stokes of Cleveland was slated to receive an honorary doctorate of laws degree at Wilmington College's graduation exercises. Since I teach a course in urban history, I was selected to write the Stokes citation and to usher the Mayor around while he was on campus. Here was my chance. Serving as a so-called urban specialist at a college located in rural Clinton County, I often feel absurd. Sometimes as I write my lectures filled with references to concrete and smog, I hear cows mooing at the school's dairy farm down the road. At such times I ask myself whether I really fulfill a necessary function. Can an urban historian from Cincinnati

find happiness in a town whose skyline is dominated by a grain elevator? With Carl Stokes on campus, I could justify my stance that even Wilmington could not evade its responsibilities in America's urban network.

The scenario for Stokes' arrival at Wilmington was ideal for anyone wishing to depict our mobile society. Actual events proved that man's utilizations of technology to overcome time and space can still provide plenty of physical jerks and mental anxieties. Cleveland's Mayor landed at Dayton Airport after attending an urban conference in Washington D.C. A Wilmington pilot and I arranged to whisk Stokes and his aide off his commercial flight onto our four-seater private plane. We flew the Mayor into Wilmington just in time for graduation ceremonies. Later, my wife and I drove Stokes back to Dayton in time for an evening flight to Cleveland.

Although we made every connection, there were moments when I hated this brief fling as a Southern Ohio jet-setter. Unable to see a tiny cement runway below, I thought we were about to crash in a cornfield on the flight from Dayton to Wilmington. A few pigs and cows made up the welcoming committee for Mayor Stokes's arrival at the Wilmington airstrip. The return trip to Dayton was marred by a Sunday afternoon traffic jam—a delay which made it necessary to say goodbye to Mayor Stokes and his aide while we ran the hundred yard dash to gate fourteen.

Mayor Stokes realizes that he's a local leader loaded down with national problems. Instead of reviewing Cleveland's situation for Wilmington's graduation class, he talked about the war in Vietnam. Because of a revenue loss to outer suburbs, urban leaders find it difficult enough to maintain basic services like garbage removal; with billions of dollars tied

up in military expenditures, programs for housing, education, recreation and employment evaporate or stagnate. "If the federal government continues to neglect cities in order to pour money into defense," said Stokes, "we may soon possess nothing to defend."

In his speech the Mayor told his student audience that their generation would revive urban life, but in private he expressed his doubts that white America would ever make an appropriate response to present social conditions. Fresh election returns from Los Angeles confronted Stokes. A backlash created from the fears and hates of lower middle-class white America threatens to swing many municipal elections this year. The Mayor indicated that he was considered the enemy in dozens of ethnic and blue collar neighborhoods on Cleveland's West side. "None of these people shouting 'law and order' know how absurd that slogan really is," said Stokes. "The most explosive people in Cleveland's black community are the kids from twelve to seventeen. High schools are filled with sawed off anarchists. What would the law and order boys do about that? Put a battalion of National Guardsmen in every eighth grade class?"

Carl Stokes wore a well tailored, modish business suit. He offered me one of his imported cigars. As he sipped a martini, he quizzed Marcy, my wife, about several of our antique tables. The Mayor collects antiques, and he told us about some of his latest coups among antique dealers.

We sat there, two WASPs, honored that Stokes would accept our invitation to come over for a drink. As a neophyte urbanologist, I sat at the feet of an acknowledged urban statesman. Wasn't this an example of the American Dream? Carl Stokes's career is a modern Horatio Alger story. A poor black man works hard, overcomes obstacles, gets a break or two, and becomes mayor of Cleveland. Did the Mayor's success prove that there was still plenty of mobility within the social system? Was Nixon's rhetoric about creating a lot of black capitalists essentially sound?

Would ghetto dwellers renew their faith in traditional American values if Harlem's main drag was suddenly transformed into Main Street U.S.A. by a host of hustling black Babbitts?

Suddenly I realized that it was 1969 and not 1869. Even in 19th century America, Horatio Alger stories were 90% mythology. Recent studies reveal that every rags-to-riches example can be offset by statistics of millions of men who spent all of their lives in one factory job. Just enough workers rose to become neighborhood grocers to keep the dream alive for America's unskilled laborers.

Boom times for unskilled labor vanished decades ago. Even in that era, discrimination kept black people from taking part in this upward cycle. Today education provides the one route to success. In an age when General Motors' productivity outstrips the Belgian economy, one must become skeptical of the lasting value of myriad bootstrap businesses in the ghetto. I began to think about all the want ads for computer programmers. Mayor Stokes's description of life in the ghetto schools came to mind. At the moment, there seemed to be no answers; I preferred to listen to Mayor Stokes and my wife chat about furniture.

* * *

Whenever I think of Shaker Heights, I dream of lawns. Everyone's front yard looks like a putting green. Driving around this Cleveland suburb, one hears the swish of water sprinklers and the roar of power mowers. The Van Sweringen brothers applied tasteful planning when they created this bedroom suburb for Cleveland's elite in the 1920's. These real estate tycoons reviewed every prospective resident and house plan to insure that people and building materials met their rigid standards. And everyone agreed to keep his lawn in order.

Today, Shaker Heights still ranks among the wealthiest communities in the country. It is not an entirely WASP suburb anymore; rich Jews and Negroes live within its boundaries; its residents still fuss over their lawns. We hear a lot about national

priorities these days, and in Shaker Heights, keeping a yard free of crabgrass ranks well ahead of issues like poverty and the deployment of an ABM system. Some day Shaker Heights may build a hall of fame to honor suburbanites who kept the finest lawns. Visualize a memorial plaque in such a pantheon. It might read: "Gerald 'Green Thumb' Davis. Davis led the suburb in grass texture in the 1972 and 1974 seasons. Known as a triple threat man, he handled a power mower, a sprinkler, and hedge clippers with great dexterity." In Shaker Heights, people measure out their lives in bags of lawn fertilizer instead of coffee spoons.

* * *

It is late July. Out on center court Arthur Ashe volleys a tennis ball beyond his opponent's reach. Two weeks ago, Ashe gained the semifinals at Wimbledon. Now he darts around on court one at the Cincinnati Tennis Club. Polite applause occurs whenever he hits one of his unreturnable serves. Today's temperature must be about 90 degrees in the shade, but tennis buffs would enter an inferno to watch Ashe blast a tennis ball. I commuted fifty miles from Wilmington to view this spectacle.

A good bit of irony exists in the scene. The Cincinnati Tennis Club rests on the edge of an enclave of black neighborhoods. Sometimes black children line the fences to jeer at overweight bankers as they bounce about the baselines on the club courts. Now, a predominantly white country club crowd watches as a slim black man executes tennis strokes that none of them will ever be able to duplicate.

Many people will remember this week because of Apollo 11 and the moon landing. I'll recall these few days for different reasons. In moments of boredom, I'll conjure up an image of Arthur Ashe slamming balls with a racket that looks like a metal snow shoe.

A man from Wapakoneta, Ohio, has walked in the Sea of Tranquility. In former times, a bright boy from a small town went to Cleveland or Cincinnati to seek success. Now he goes to the moon.

—W. K. Woods

Toward the First Empty Beer Can in Outer Space

I've never been much enthused about space travel, largely on the theory that any trip requiring more than two suitcases wasn't worth the effort. Our recent excursion to the moon, however, has caused me to rethink my position. I can now report that upon mature consideration, I am foursquare opposed to the further exploration of space.

In the first place, too many persons tend to think of it as the "conquest" of space rather than exploration. This is an ominous sign. When Man sets out to conquer something, he by God does it. He brings it to its knees and makes it cry for mercy. Thus, in our country, the Conquest of the Wilderness has meant Gary, Indiana; the Conquest of the West, the genocide of our Indian tribes; the Conquest of the Atom, Hiroshima.

Already we hear faint murmurings of using the moon as a military base and talk of the "colonization" of outer space. Of course, you don't hear such things from *reasonable* officials, not from "highly placed authorities." They scoff at such talk. They ridicule it; just as, in 1964, they ridiculed Barry Goldwater's bizarre suggestion that we defoliate the jungles of Vietnam.

The other source of disquietude about space travel is the manner in which the moon mission was carried out. We sent a crew up there, leaving discarded pieces of rocketry in their wake, and watched delightedly while two of them bounded around on the moon's surface. Then we all cheered as they executed the delicate maneuvers that brought them home. What we overlook is that they left the place looking like a Hell's Angels campsite, strewn with plaques and flags and boots and boxes and *urine bags*—for crying out loud. What kind of precedent is that? If they'd done it in Yellowstone, they'd have been arrested for littering. Its signi-

ficance, of course, is that we're probably less than three decades from leaving our first empty beer can in outer space.

It is interesting to speculate on the possibility that we are under observation by intelligent beings from outer space; that not all of those UFO's are duds. If so, one can imagine what the visitors' report on our moon shot must have sounded like:

"Hello, Chief . . . this is agent Zap-Zap-Ring . . . remember you asked me to keep an eye on that little planet, earth . . . you know, Milky Way galaxy, the one with all the water . . . yeah, that's it.

"Well, they just did the damndest thing and I thought you should know about it . . . They loaded three guys into a long cylinder and shot them off for a visit to the planet's satellite . . . That's what I said, a long cylinder . . . I know it's a weird thing to be traveling in but compared to *some* of the things they fly around in, it's not bad looking. At least it doesn't have wings to slow it down.

"Anyway, these guys, or rather two of them, get up on their moon and begin romping around, collecting rocks, taking pictures of each other and leaving junk around. Then they get back in their vehicle—or what's left of it, most of it having broken off during the trip—and go back to earth.

"We couldn't figure it out either. At first we thought they were engaging in an earth ritual called a picnic. The fooling around and the picture-taking and the scattering of debris is all pretty characteristic of this activity, but then we began to have some doubts . . . Well, for one thing, they didn't land their vehicle where they took off on earth . . . No, they fell right into a big body of water and had to be fished out by a boat . . . That's just it, Chief; they didn't seem at all embarrassed by it. It was as though they'd planned it

that way . . . I know it sounds screwy but if you'd been watching earth as long as I have, it wouldn't surprise you. It's a real underdeveloped planet.

"At any rate, we went down to get a closer look at the stuff they left at their moon landing site. Right away you could tell it wasn't a picnic . . . No gum wrappers . . . They did leave a flag there, however . . . It's a sort of a tribal symbol they seem to use to ward off evil spirits . . . They have quite a few different kinds, probably one for every evil spirit . . . Of course I'm not kidding; would I kid about a thing like that?

"The only other significant thing they left behind was a plaque . . . I couldn't make all of it out, something about coming in peace for all mankind . . . Peace? As nearly as I've been able to make out it's an abstract concept describing a condition that exists only in the unpopulated areas of the planet . . . Right. It also is very often used as a battle cry. Before they attack each other—which is a fairly common occurrence on earth—earth people will talk a good deal about peace.

"Other than that it's just the usual things earth people leave around wherever they go . . . cameras, walking boots, poles, urine bags . . . It would take too long to explain, Chief. I'll include full descriptions in my written report.

"Well, what do you think?

"That's what I thought, too . . . they're scouting around for a place to escape to when they've finally made their own planet unlivable . . . I wouldn't worry about it too much, Chief. The odds are that they'll blow themselves up before they can do much damage . . . Blowing each other up is part of another ritual of theirs called war . . . It's hard to define, exactly. Very often the word is used interchangeably with peace . . . Don't worry, Chief. I'll keep a watch out."

—Donald Kaul

JOHN CAGE

Choosing Abundance

Being the first of a two-part feature which provides the gist of a three-hour conversation with Mr. Cage, tape-recorded in April at Champaign-Urbana while he was in residence at the University of Illinois. The interviewers—Don Finegan, Ralph Koppel, and Ralph Haskell—are members of the Northern Iowa art department; their ostensible mission: to collect ideas for the department's future growth. Central to the composer's responses are the principles of flexibility and abundance—expressed not

On the use of space in the University:

You should know Buckminster Fuller's book, *Education Automation*, in which he suggests a space that is without partitions, in which a variety of activities is going on and the attention of the student could be at one place or another—rather than being forced to focus on a single thing that often isn't even of his choice. I think this is a good principle which can be stated in many ways. One is: where you see a boundary, remove it (or partition, to remove it). And if you *must* have them, then have them movable; and where you have—as Fuller says—a choice between fixity and flexibility, choose flexibility. This is a very good rule.

On technology in the University:

I've often felt it was unnecessary when I didn't have the means to *have* any technology, but if I can have the technology, I'm perfectly willing to use it. I don't think one should adopt an attitude against it. On the other hand, I don't think one should feel that he was dependent upon it and couldn't do anything without it. I think that it is the technology that has had—at least in art—to do with the changing of our knowledge, and that as McLuhan has pointed out—I think truthfully—whether we look at television, for instance, or whether we have access to computers is of little consequence. The fact that these things do exist is implanted in our consciousness, and the result is that we think of things to do, if we're simply drawing on paper—or if we're whistling, even—that are affected by the fact that television and computers, *et cetera*, exist. If the means exist for having them at hand for student and faculty use, then I think by all means they should be there. The only thing that would keep them from being there now would be something that would be of no interest to anyone anyway—namely, the economic structure. But as long as we have it, we have in some way to determine what we do *through* it.

On the possibility that some technologies are faddish, and that machines will not be used:

So what really is indicated by this is non-ownership—access to things, but not owning them, and then coupling that, as Fuller has often suggested, with reuse.

sible mission: to collect ideas for the department's future growth. Central to the composer's responses are the principles of flexibility and abundance—expressed not

only in physical terms which admit the existence of current technology and the desirability of having access to it, but in philosophical and

Fall 1969

9

That is to say—he's always giving the illustration of copper—finding ways to accomplish more with less copper, so that the copper instead of being thrown away goes back into the system and appears again, less of it doing more. So that if you could arrange—and already society is moving this way The computers, for instance, are not *owned*, are they?

On the "compartmentalization" of academic departments:

There's a very interesting book by Edgar Anderson, who's an economic botanist. It's called *Plants, Man, and Life*, I think, and in it he shows Well, as we know, our ways of growing plants are to grow only one plant; the result is that each plant is separate from the others. But when one mixes the plants up, and it looks almost as though it were not agriculture but was wild, then everything regenerates everything else and it becomes a healthy situation for the plant. I would say in life, too. The only kinds of ideas that really interest me in any of the arts are ideas that also work in lives, or with plants—where, after all, our problem is that we're individuals, that we're members of society, and that society inhabits an environment—and that's Nature. And these things have to work together. This business of organization which is so inherent in education has many, many dangers—and it has also many usefulnesses, as we know. For instance, if someone telephoned a number, dialed a number and got just *anybody* each time, and the person *changed* each time, the telephone system would be of little use to us. It's there that we need some kind of order. And if I turned on the water, and not water but dust came out, or wine, or something else—there might be times when it would be pleasant, but other times it would be useless. We need to place organization where it is useful, and we need to place disorganization or unpredictability of interpenetrations elsewhere. And more and more, whether we place it or not, this is happening because of communications. You know what I mean.

On reasons for using the computer:

The computer is in the society; I am in the society. If I have access to it, I must use it in order to see whether it's lively or not. You must have read *Walden*; near the beginning of the book Thoreau said: "I am going out to the woods to live in order to face life at its barest essential point, to discover whether it's something grand or something trivial, and then publicize that fact." This was his intention, and I think it's a perfectly good intention, paraphraseable for almost every circumstance. As far as how things happen to us, they happen either by our instigating them ourselves—or thinking we instigate them—or by being invited by someone in the society to do something that we're not right then doing. So we're in no danger of not having something to do since we can start the ball rolling, or someone else can suggest that we roll it. I think that two of the most important things to steer us in what is obviously a changing and complex situation are—one I've already mentioned: to choose flexibility when one can, as opposed to "fixity;" that's extremely relevant with regard to anything you can think of—it's like a basic principle. Another basic principle, I think, is: choose abundance rather than scarcity. Be wasteful, rather than pinch-penny. Get as much as you can out of all that there is to be had. Have it even if you don't use it, or even if you use it badly as a gadget.

On working with what one has:

That's all right; one can, but one must also be aware of why one doesn't have the other—and that the reason is simply an economic one. We have a very funny society now; we have—I don't know what the exact figures are, but we're all aware that the nature of the situation is this: in this century more new ideas have come into existence, more awarenesses and technological developments, than in all of history put together, and we expect in the next ten years to have more ideas than we've already had in this century. In other words, we're in the situation Fuller grasped, and we're at the critical point—and as we start going up, *it* will go up very quickly and easily. That the society should have functioned, as long as it has, divisively, one

political terms which draw distinctions between what's necessary and what's not. The questions raised by the

interviewers are necessarily condensed into one-line provocations of sorts; all else is verbatim. Consistent with

part of it against another part and doing its finest efforts in time of war rather than in time of life, is a curious thing—in that this element of competition should have been idealized as necessary for what one calls “motivation,” “impetus,” and so on, and has been imbedded in our educational system and in much of everything else. So we know that we *have* these machines, we know that we have these ideas, but we also know that we don’t have access to them for economic reasons—and those economic reasons are part of that competitive business. And yet all it was to begin with was the human race on earth, and somehow it must be brought to that again, making use of the things it has been able to think of, rather than dividing the usefulness of those things within society so that you have a division of haves and have-nots. What we need is to have a whole world of haves. Now one way to move or to checkmate—or to fool’s-mate—the economic structures that now exist is to break down the boundaries between *your* University and other universities increasingly—to throw a stone, so to speak, into the economic structure as into a lake and to let its effects spread out—so that your usefulness is put together with the usefulness of other like institutions. So that if one of you had such-and-such a machine, another of you might have the other one which at the present time you can’t get, and in that way you might make the effect of throwing this stone so great that there wouldn’t be anything that you didn’t have access to.

On the directions of art:

I think we had thought in the past that art was going in one direction, and I think that that is no longer the case. I think it’s going in many directions, and that these directions are not to be evaluated but rather to be experienced; and the fact that they are abundant is an example of what I just said about choosing abundance, and even waste, instead of choosing economy and pinch-penny—or you could say choose multiplicity and disorder instead of choosing unity. And give up first of all a sense of values; yet this is so dear to academic discussions—the notion of value. But how can we speak of value in this day and age when we are now, for the first time, really aware of people who—if they do have values—have values quite other than ours? So can we not see from that, that any clinging to *our* values will only continue the divisiveness of the world which has made it so good at killing and so poor at living? All you have to do is pick up an English book of 100 years ago to see a cultivated musician’s attitude toward Indian music—to see that the world attitude toward Indian music has changed utterly in a hundred years. The beauties of that music are now available to people in the teen age, where a cultivated musician was absolutely deaf to Indian music in the 19th Century. He thought it was of no complexity whatsoever, and therefore of no interest in relation to 19th century European music. Now, if we are, you know, connoisseurs and so on, we find Indian music preferable, actually, to the 19th century music—although we do discover new beauties in the 19th Century that we’d somehow overlooked. I would include the sciences, too, and I think there are scientists here, scientists at the University of Illinois, for instance, inviting teachers from other departments to teach subjects which they don’t know. The plan is to bring about a fructifying in a situation that has been stultified. And it can break across boundaries—but we’ve said this already. Every boundary you see, I think, you should try to see if it can be removed. Is it something that is really necessary in the sense that the telephone is or that the water faucet is, or is it something that simply satisfies a bureaucracy? I mean, was it a necessary boundary or wasn’t it? And if it wasn’t necessary, then I think you can expect that the good it did in the past when it was separating things can be kept when it isn’t separating things. I had a curious experience yesterday. I had an appointment and I wasn’t clear as to where the Coordinated Sciences building was, so I dropped first into the one which has that name on it, which is an old building. And looking for the room number I practically went through the whole building—because no one in the building knew where the room numbers were, and they were poorly organized. But in the course of that I saw all kinds of things that I wouldn’t see in a music school, or at home, or in a supermarket. All kinds of machinery and things that were strange—almost like going to a foreign country; and then I finally got into the new building that the room is actually in, and it, too,

the idea of flexibility appears the idea of free intellectual curiosity, unimpeded by rigid notions of “value.” So much is new—technologically—that one is obliged to

call into question the old reasons for doing some things, and the old excuses for not doing others. Music once scorned is now prized; disciplines once narrow are

has many different kinds of things in it that aren't ever connected with music—or painting, or sculpture—which could be refreshing.

On whether a teacher should be a catalyst:

You mean that he inspires? I think that's marvelous. Don't you? Because you see we are going to have more people. We now have three-and-a-half billion, and by the year 2000 we'll have seven billion, and by the year 2060 we'll have 20 billion. So again, that opening up and interpenetrating of directions is going to be perfectly feasible in a society that has furthermore probably solved the problem of work, and has plenty of time to do anything.

On recognizing a crisis:

I think we should be very careful to know what a crisis is and what a crisis *isn't*. One speaks now, for instance, of privacy as a problem, or leisure as a problem. I don't think either one of those is a problem. I think we should recognize that our technology is bringing us together, and that privacy, after all, is not desirable. That togetherness is much more desirable. And this will be emphasized by taking down a partition wherever you can. To have things together that don't seem to belong together will be of really—I may be using the wrong term—*humanistic* value. Not by saying that it is a value, but by living it—by living together, rather than thinking we have to be separate from one another and that what we really desired in life was to be alone. Just having that view, we will not be so alarmed by what we now call overpopulation. We don't want, of course, to have a population which exceeds the balance between what there is to have and all the people who are living—though we now suffer from having many people not having what they need. But we would like to solve this, so that everybody in the world will have what he needs to live. They say we can support 20 billion, and we might be able to support up to 35 billion—but beyond that it's dangerous, so naturally we have to think of what to do. And then we could have a crisis; that *would* be a crisis. But it will not be a crisis that people are obliged to be together, rather than alone. It will not be a crisis that people have nothing to do. I have faith that when people sleep and rest, they wake up in the morning—just through metabolism—with energy, and that they will think of something to do. Now, if they think of something to do that seems to us to be of no value, we must then question our values—and perhaps broaden them to include the values of the person who thought of doing what he was doing. Don't you think?

Might doing nothing be a crisis?

But you see, Zen Buddhism struggles in that direction; it turns out to be very difficult to do *nothing*—and it can have the most *spiritual* consequences.

On the wider options available to modern man:

There are so many things now, and one's more and more aware of things to do. This, of course, is a problem, I think, that should be solved by each individual, don't you? What is it he is willing to devote his time to? It's as simple as that. Then Margaret Mead suggests that since we live longer now we might change, and there's no reason—again this is flexibility as opposed to fixity—no reason to think that it's virtuous to remain one thing throughout one's life; that the dedication could take some other form, as moving from music to botany—or maybe finding a connection between the two. *Et cetera*. That we used to live long enough to devote ourselves to one thing, but now we live longer so we could be devoted to many, or—giving up this notion of “mainstream” in history, and seeing that we're going in many directions—we ourselves could explore. And I think then a reasonable thing to do—if one also gave up competition—would be to do those things that no one else was doing, and being informed, of course, at the same time about what *was* being done; improving our communications so that we would know what was going on, and then do something that was not being done. I asked Fuller, for instance, once when I became extremely interested in his notion of a house that was unattached to the earth for its utilities—I said: “Are you working on that?”

now broadening. Since not only knowledge, but population, is exploding, is there any reason to go on longing for the old privacy? Since

men are living longer, is there any reason to stick to a single career? Since there is so much to do, is there

He said: "I don't need to," and I said, "Well, what do you mean by that?" And he said: "Well, they're doing it in the space program." In the space program. From his point of view, one of the major values of the exploration in space is that it is necessary to produce a contained house for long trips whereby one can live comfortably without attachment to the earth. That would mean that we can live in wilderness, or on tops of mountains, or in the Arctic regions, or on the oceans—so that the whole perspective with regard to the problem of overpopulation disappears. Because even in Japan the mountains are relatively uninhabited. Then, in a paper I had from Fuller just recently, he indicated—as I indicate in the field of music—that the *goal*—going toward the rainbow, so to speak—is not to have any. That is to say, an architecture which doesn't appear to be an architecture will be a marvelous place to live; and a music which isn't music, and yet satisfies one's musical inclinations, is what I have now: namely, the ambient sounds. I find the sounds around me more to my enjoyment than any music I know of; and I have that all the time, and it's constantly changing. And that can be had—it's harder for us to envision it in the case of shelter, but apparently Bucky Fuller envisions it: I've seen it—in his terms. That is to say, two transparent geodesic domes one within the other with plants placed between the two so that you would be living, so to speak, in a garden and have both—as though you were "sheltered" and as though you were not.

On the indivisibility of consciousness, and whether it might be called "reverence":

Yes, and I think it's coming to us now particularly, perhaps, through the Orient—because of their continuing in history to have a regard for the environment which we really for the most part ignored. We considered it to greater advantage, you know, to dig it up and to make something than to just sit still doing nothing. Whereas they had that other idea; and now these ideas are interpenetrating, and our technology is moving in the direction of making it more and more evident to us that the environment has beauties. For instance, two students came by quite excited the other day, offering to show me laser projections of three-dimensional images—Have you seen them?—which I have seen at Bell Labs in Murray Hill, New Jersey. So I said "We can talk—especially because I have seen them." But having seen them, well, we can speak of them also as reflections, you know, of things that are already here without any technology. And furthermore, in our windows and so forth, the things that we see are in colors, which is going to be very difficult for technology to produce. But it's *got* to, and when it does it will be as though there were no technology, because we already have it anyway. But the *technology* makes us excited, you see; whereas we could look at reflections in windows without "seeing" them, with the technology they won't be disregarded any longer.

any point to doing what someone else is already doing? What's suggested here seems to be an innocent concern for things-as-they-are,

On symbols:

In Buddhism there is the term *Yatha butham*, which means "just as it is"—and this is what appeals to me, though I see every now and then that some people are interested in symbols. But what they mean by symbols seems to be different from what I thought they meant. There's a very fine fellow I'm working with on HPSCHD here in May, and his name is Calvin Sumsion—he's in the design department, and he used the word "symbol" enthusiastically the other day; it dawned on me that what he meant was a representation of visual things, rather than abstraction, and that all he meant by "symbols" was that. He didn't mean, for instance, that a dove means "peace." He meant that a picture of the dove was a symbol of the dove. And that's very different from what I would have meant, so I'm getting more interested in symbols.

On whether a department within the university can choose flexibility without asking that the whole university also make the same choice:

You mean everybody changing at once. In a sense it's happening, and in another sense it seems *not* to be happening; that's what makes this present period so

and a peculiar kind of expansion of consciousness

Fall 1969

13

which consists in recreating Nature—not remaking it, altering it, destroying it, but

interesting and complex and stimulating—that very contradictory things coexist everywhere. We have to see, for instance, that what we call “student revolution” is not confined to one school, or one country, but is all over the world. And then the “Free University”: I imagine it’s cropping up in all universities as a facility for study and teaching which doesn’t fit into the curriculum at all, which doesn’t give any degrees at all. I was at a meeting of a number of the music faculty the other evening in which it was proposed—by a man who may very well be in the administration here—that there be a third program set up in which a student could elect all of his studies. This would free him of any curriculum responsibility whatsoever, and he would be given, instead of a degree, a certificate when he left—if he left—saying what in fact he did while he was here. Which I think would be more interesting to read than a degree.

On whether “education” should be primarily experiential, rather than productive:

People complained who knew Thoreau; he was a controversial figure and he was averse to schools, you know—he was a teacher for a little bit, but he left the educational system quickly. His neighbors complained that he did nothing, and even Emerson complains that all he was worth was as captain of the Huckleberry Party, but history has proved otherwise. Three instances: India—through Gandhi, through Thoreau—changed a whole political structure; the Danes—through the Essay on Civil Disobedience—successfully fooled Hitler’s occupation; and Martin Luther King. There you see: all that’s needed is re-examination, really, of our value system with regard to what people do. Poets down through the ages, and saints and so forth, have *advised* inactivity. And we haven’t listened—at least the universities haven’t listened. Yet they’re willing to teach the poetry. It’s a very strange situation.

On whether familiar “structures” must vanish:

abandoning old habits of abstraction to deal with the concrete. Let university students be free, Cage suggests;

We don’t need to give up the past as we go into the future. As we make changes, we don’t have to lose. If we keep the notion of becoming abundant rather than scarce. To stay rich rather than poor. There is no reason to say we won’t have any more harmony or counterpoint or orchestration or bassoon-playing, etc. We can keep those things. Perhaps some of the rigor with which they have been taught in the past will have to continue for *those* things into the future or *could*. One wouldn’t have to wipe the slate clean, so to speak, in order to start. One can add or multiply the possibilities. Wesleyan University, in Connecticut, which is quite wealthy, had the obvious need for new auditoriums—places for theatre, for music, and so forth. In the meantime they had developed a private school of music which taught oriental music, and with that school of oriental music the students, not only at that university but ones around about could come each Friday to what is called a “Curry Concert” which consists of music and then food—Indian food, beautifully prepared—and then more music and then oriental dancing, and all of that activity goes on. Well, with the money and so forth in the plans to make more halls, instead of doing what they’re doing here, huge ones, they’re making a village of small ones, so that of an evening you could have a choice between hearing European string quartets, Indian music, Japanese music, rock and roll, etc. And it’s very very beautiful, and this kind of richness is what we actually have now with our television. Being able to change from one station to another. Now as laser beams affect television, I understand there will be the possibility of multiplying the broadcasting stations, since the bands needed will be much thinner— isn’t that true? The result is that the future of television is great. You could have a television station that was relatively specialized, so that when you tuned to it you would know what it was you were doing. Rather than now, not knowing more or less what you were going to get except a potpourri of something or other. But you would be able to do as the Japanese do in Tokyo now when they go to a coffee house. They choose whether they go to the coffee house that plays Debussy or the one that plays Beethoven, or the one that plays Mozart or the one that plays Japanese music, or whichever one they choose. They have a great variety.

On finding an audience for art:

I think an important development in the future of communicating together will be the adding of the screen to the telephone. And then accompanying it with—oh, each person would have, say, a thousand sheets of material upon which anything could be recorded and subsequently erased, so that at any instant everyone in the world would have access to one thousand sheets of *something*. It could be reproductions of paintings, or books, or music, or whatever, and he could easily give it up at any moment by erasing it—and have it again the very next moment if he felt “Well, I didn’t mean to erase it.” It would just be dialed, and he could get what it was he needed whenever he needed it. Then we could drop out from the society all the purveyors of things; all the middlemen. The publishers—we wouldn’t have any need for them; and if we improved our transportation means as we do this, having *seen* through reproductions, we might get the curiosity to see the original and we could go quickly to it and see it, and return home, or move to another house. This is an application of that notion of flexibility.

let us all have wider and wider choices to fool around with, and let’s use technology to exercise those choices

Does the computer alter the concept of “audience?”

I think that not the computer itself, but the ideas which I and others have in the field of music have done this already, so that we think of the concert more and more not as something that begins and ends, but a process that continues and sometimes very long so that people could come and go; again, flexibility. And one of the things that’s so annoying about concerts to people who are themselves, let us say, not music lovers, is this business of sitting in rows in a theatre situation, and our tendency now is to remove that by having a space in which people can move or sit, go out, come in . . . in the course of the performance of music. What the computer seems to me to be helping with is several things; one, it’s helping us to know how we think, because if we don’t make our thinking very clear to the machine it doesn’t understand us, so we begin to know more about thought processes through the computer than we knew before. It’s also allowing us to do larger projects than we would even have set out upon previously because we would have foreseen that we wouldn’t have had time to do them, but once the programming is accomplished, the computer works very quickly and enables one to think in physically larger, quantitative terms. And then the difficulty involved in preparing a program is so great, not only in my experience but in that of others I talked to, that one thinks that something has been accomplished by a program—and, indeed, something *has* been accomplished. But it seems to be worth more than to use it for one’s own purposes. The notion of ownership is, and possessiveness, is undercut in the same way that it is undercut by much of our technology—tape recorders, radios, television, and so forth, that enable people to have material for which they haven’t paid.

—with none of our former dependence on the economics of ownership, or even on the necessity of scheduling ourselves. Technology, it turns

Will there be any future need for concert halls and museums?

No, but this notion of having what we need—it seems to me to be laid at the door of the Germans; I think it’s a false idea that they’ve buffaloed us into—I think we can perfectly well do things that are not necessary, and that it will seem pleasurable to us to get together and have an unnecessary concert.

On whether concerts are more pleasurable experienced by groups of people:

Well, I think there is a great difference between an original painting and a reproduction, and between a live performance of music and a recording, and the general experience as numbers increase will be of recordings as things develop in technology, and people may even learn to prefer them to the original, but others will want to see the original and will realize that there is a difference.

Can one have so much music that he no longer needs it?

Well, I already have that situation, but it doesn’t do me any good because I have a great deal of music. You know, I go, through circumstances, to a number of concerts,

but I certainly don't search them out, I only go through circumstances and I don't keep any records, I don't have any radio or any TV. So that I don't have any reliance on having music because I have always sounds around me. Nevertheless, I'm a musician and I make music and I am able to listen to other people's music.

Will it suffice us to read the manuscript of a piece of music?

That's not my point. My point is the reverse. It has been thought in the past that music was something that existed in a person's mind and feelings and that he wrote it down and that he had heard it before it was audible. My point has been that we don't hear anything until it is audible. At least I don't. And if I did hear something before it was audible, I would have had to take solfege, which would have trained me to accept certain pitches and not others. I would then have found the environmental sounds off tune, lacking tonality. Therefore I pay no attention to solfege. I don't have perfect pitch; I simply keep my ears open, my mind empty but alert. Period. And the result is that I can hear things that are off tune, on tune—I suppose it makes a difference, but not one that I approach in terms of value. I try to approach each sound as *itself*. Now I find I can do that better with sounds that *aren't* music than sounds that *are* music; but I try to make my own music, and I notice that more and more people are making music that is *like* the environment.

Is this a kind of ultimate abstractness?

No, I would say rather an ultimate reality. Wouldn't you?

We had an argument after playing two tapes made by a composer here named Wolf Rosenberg, and he was defended by Herbert Bruhn, who's done some beautiful work here with computer music. Herbert Bruhn was insisting that anything we do is artificial, and I disagreed and said that I knew perfectly well that in my experience they are not artificial. Now what would make sounds artificial would be that one wasn't really interested in them or paying attention to them, and that what was of concern to one was the relationship to the sound. This notion of relationship actually makes the sound unimportant. You could have a musical idea and express it, let us say, in lights or something. Or some other relationships—maybe apples. I have become interested not in relationships—though I see that things interpenetrate—but I think they interpenetrate more richly, more abundantly, when I don't establish any relationship. So one of the first things I've done, which it seems to me is what nature has done, too, is not to make a fixed score. When I have three sounds, I don't think that one must come first, and then the next, and then the other, but that they can go together in any way, and that's exactly what happens to the birds and the automobiles and so on—At any rate that freedom from a fixed relation introduces me to the sounds of my environment.

On the interplay between art and music:

I think that this is a realization in music which is different than what music was at the turn of the century. It was then that music so greatly influenced the visual arts as to be the excuse for the turn toward abstraction; you recall cubism and so on. All the manifestos spoke of music as having already accomplished this that was now being done in painting. I think that much of what is being done since 1950 in music is a response to this openness you spoke of in the visual arts which was the response to music, and that the dialogue continues because the physical circumstances are different to bring about changes. So that music's response now to the visual arts of the first half of the century produces a situation to which the visual arts must now reply, or may reply. I think it's already involved film, for instance, in the use of a plurality of screens rather than one. That *that* is like music without a fixed score.

You see this can proceed in many directions. Not just, dogmatically, one. It can proceed—there is one film I saw at Montreal; it was called "Labyrinth." Now there was a case of several screens being used quite dramatically in what I would say

out, is offering us such independence; it isn't an artificial invitation unless we refuse to make it a part of our

lives. We can hang on to "value" if we want, but the abundance of technology is

corresponded to a 19th century orchestration. So that one film related to another dramatically at special moments. And that if the films were not synchronized, fixed together, that the dramatic effect intended would not be gained.

On whether films must necessarily be "linear:"

It isn't necessary. We see in the work of Stan Vanderbeek and others that it's perfectly reasonable to have things going on at the same time that aren't related, or as with the Watts group in Ann Arbor, Michigan, during their 16 mm festival. There something else appeared. It appears in my experience more and more. They discovered with that film festival, that the films could be poor but that the combination of them was not poor. Now this is very much like what Bucky Fuller says when he says "synergy", or what happens when we make an alloy of metals so that a strength comes about from things that don't have that strength simply because they come together. So that the whole question of quality which has been of such concern to the university—or to the whole question of education—to teach the good rather than the bad, is put in question because the bad if it enters into an abundant enough situation is no longer bad. In fact, it's a little spicy. I discovered that also with the computer piece. There are 52 tapes, and we have to make a recording for the Nonesuch Company which the university contracted us to do, so we had to go to Chicago to put the tapes together in a special studio where they could do eight at a time so we would have few generations and so not lose the signals. And when we had seventeen together it sounded like chamber music; when we had thirty-four together it sounded orchestral; and when we had fifty-two together it didn't sound like anything we had ever heard before. It rather suggested dimensions—dimensions of sound that were so thick that it was like a frieze on one of those Indian temples, you know, where it seems to be sculptured but it's actually bas-relief. It was just marvelous. So I got the notion to do the same thing with typography, and I've been asked to make a text for *Art in America* dealing with Marcel Duchamp whom I knew quite closely in recent years, particularly in Germany; before he died we were two weeks together. So I agreed, naturally, to do something but said I would like to do what I've been wanting to do: to make a text which had no syntax. And so I subjected the dictionary to chance operations—the *I Ching*. All the words, so that I could divide all the pages of this dictionary—1428, including the boys' and girls' names at the end—I could divide that by 64, producing groups of pages of 22 or 23. That comes out to 64. Then I subject 22 and 23 to 64, to get groups of 2 and 3, so that when I get another hexagram I know precisely which page I'm on. Then I count the words on the page and relate *that* to 64 and know immediately what word I'm dealing with. Then I ask how many forms does the word have—if it's a noun, if it's a verb; is it singular or is it plural. If there's an illustration, is it the word or the illustration, etc. So that I finally pinpoint what it is I have to do in the text. Then *where* on the page does it go?—The page likewise submitted to the *I Ching*. And I did it very finely so as to avoid a module. Again, by means of abundance; quantity not quality.

You see from Corbusier's point of view, which is quality, a module becomes of great importance. From a quantitative point of view, which I'm trying to work with, a module becomes, if *necessary*, then something too obscure. Anyway, the place, the direction of the word, and then submitting each letter to the chance operation—is it present? is it in process of disappearing, as Duchamp himself had disappeared, you see. Is it disappearing structurally? If it's an E it has four parts, the three horizontals and the vertical; which one of them is missing, if one is missing? Or is it being eaten by some disease—as the poor man, too, was. Then you have in the end when you superimpose many realizations of this process with that instant lettering business, you know, when you have 261 type faces, you then work into a very rich situation. And some of the type faces are—from a value point of view, qualitative point of view—clearly poor type faces, but from an abundant point of view, they are *Yatha butham*—just as they are. And when they are just as they are in this rich configuration of things, they are beautiful. And the Lord must have had a similar idea in mind.

teaching us that even if you put together a lot of "poor" things, the total result may emerge as "excellent." An

alloy combining weak metals may be strong; there may even be a virtue in novelty.

Perhaps the argument, in the end, is simply that everything is possible and everything is good.

IF THEY KNEW YVONNE

A Story by Andre Dubus

to Andre and Jeb

I grew up in Louisiana, and for twelve years I went to a boys' school taught by Christian Brothers, a Catholic religious order. In the eighth grade our teacher was Brother Thomas. I still have a picture he gave to each boy in the class at the end of that year: it's a picture of Thomas Aquinas, two angels, and a woman. In the left foreground Aquinas is seated, leaning back against one angel whose hands grip his shoulders; he looks very much like a tired boxer between rounds, and his upturned face looks imploringly at the angel. The second angel is kneeling at his feet and, with both hands, is tightening a sash around Aquinas's waist. In the left background of the picture, the woman is escaping up a flight of stone stairs; her face is turned backward for a final look before she bolts from the room. According to Brother Thomas, some of Aquinas's family were against his becoming a priest, so they sent a woman to his room. He drove her out, then angels descended, encircled his waist with a cord, and squeezed all concupiscence from his body so he would never be tempted again. On the back of the picture, under the title *Angelic Warfare*, is a prayer for purity.

Brother Thomas was the first teacher who named for us the sins included in the Sixth and Ninth Commandments which, in the Catholic recording of the Decalogue, forbid adultery and coveting your neighbor's wife. In an introductory way, he simply listed the various sins. Then he focused on what apparently was the most significant: he called it self-abuse and, quickly sweeping our faces,

he saw that we understood. It was a mortal sin, he said, because first of all it wasted the precious seed which God had given us for marriage. Also, sexual pleasure was reserved for married people alone, to have children by performing the marriage act. Self-abuse was not even a natural act; it was unnatural, and if a boy did it he was no better than a monkey. It was a desecration of our bodies, which were temples of the Holy Ghost, a mortal sin that resulted in the loss of sanctifying grace and therefore could send us to hell. He walked a few paces from his desk, his legs hidden by the long black robe, then he went back and stood behind the desk again and pulled down on his white collar: the front of it hung straight down from his throat like two white and faceless playing cards.

"Avoid being alone," he said. "When you go home from school, don't just sit around the house—go out and play ball, or cut the grass, or wash your dad's car. Do *anything*, but use up your energy. And pray to the Blessed Mother: take your rosary to bed at night and say it while you're going to sleep. If you fall asleep before you finish, the Blessed Mother won't mind—that's what she *wants* you to do."

ANDRE DUBUS teaches and writes in Bradford, Massachusetts. His first novel was *THE LIEUTENANT*, and his shorter fiction appears frequently in *THE NEW YORKER*.

Then he urged us to receive the Holy Eucharist often. He told us of the benefits gained through the Eucharist: sanctifying grace, which helped us fight temptation; release from the temporal punishment of purgatory; and therefore, until we committed another mortal or venial sin, a guarantee of immediate entrance into heaven. He hoped and prayed, he said, that he would die with the Holy Eucharist on his tongue.

He had been talking with the excited voice yet wandering eyes of a man repeating by rote what he truly believes. But now his eyes focused on something out the window, as though a new truth had actually appeared to him on the dusty school ground of that hot spring day. One hand rose to scratch his jaw.

"In a way," he said softly, "you'd actually be doing someone a favor if you killed him when he had just received the Eucharist."

I made it until mid-summer, about two weeks short of my fourteenth birthday. I actually believed I would make it forever. Then one hot summer night when my parents were out playing bridge, Janet was on a date, and I was alone in the house, looking at *Holiday* magazine—girls in advertisements drinking rum or lighting cigarettes, girls in bulky sweaters at ski resorts, girls at beaches, girls on horseback—I went to the bathroom, telling myself I was only going to piss, lingering there, thinking it was pain I felt but then I knew it wasn't, that for the first wakeful time in my life it was about to happen, then it did, and I stood weak and trembling and shutting my eyes saw the faces of the Virgin Mary and Christ and Brother Thomas, then above them, descending to join them, the awful diaphanous bulk of God.

That was a Tuesday. I set the alarm clock and woke next morning at six-thirty, feeling that everyone on earth and in Heaven had watched my sin, and had been watching me as I slept. I dressed quickly and crept past Janet's bedroom: she slept naked, on her side, one sun-dark arm on top of the sheet; then past the closed door of my parents' room and out of the house. Riding my bicycle down the driveway I thought of being struck by a car, so I rode on the sidewalk to church and I got there in time for confession before Mass. When I got home Janet was sitting on the front steps, drinking orange juice. I rode across the lawn and stopped in front of her and looked at her smooth brown legs.

"Where'd you go?"

"To Mass."

"Special day today?"

"I woke up," I said. "So I went."

A fly buzzed at my ear and I remembered Brother Thomas quoting some saint who had said if you couldn't stand an insect buzzing at your ear while you were trying to sleep, how could you stand the eternal punishment of hell?

"You set the alarm," she said. "I heard it."

Then Mother called us in to breakfast. She asked where I had been, then said: "Well, that's nice. Maybe you'll be a priest."

"Ha," Daddy said.

"Don't worry, Daddy," Janet said. "We don't hate Episcopalians anymore."

I got through two more days, until Friday, then Saturday afternoon I had to go to confession again. Through the veil over the latticed window Father Broussard told me to pray often to the Virgin Mary, to avoid those people and places and things that were occasions of sin, to go to confession and receive Communion at least once a week. The tone of his whispering voice was kind, and the confessional itself was constructed to offer some comfort, for it enclosed me with my secret, and its interior was dark as my soul was, and Christ crucified stared back at me, inches from my face. Father Broussard told me to say ten Our Fathers and ten Hail Marys for my penance. I said them kneeling in a pew at the rear, then I went outside and walked around the church to the cemetery. In hot sun I moved among old graves and took out my rosary and began to pray.

Sunday we went to eleven o'clock Mass. Janet and I received Communion, but Mother had eaten toast and coffee, breaking her fast, so she didn't receive. Most Sundays she broke her fast because we went to late Mass, and in those days you had to fast from midnight until you received Communion; around ten in the morning she would feel faint and have to eat something. After Mass Janet started the car and lit a cigarette and waited for our line in the parking lot to move. I envied her nerve. She was only sixteen, but when she started smoking my parents couldn't stop her.

"I just can't keep the fast," Mother said. "I must need vitamins."

She was sitting in the front seat, opening and closing her black fan.

"Maybe you do," Janet said.

"Maybe so. If you have to smoke, I wish you'd do it at home."

Janet smiled and drove in first gear out of the parking lot. Her window was down and on the way home I watched her dark hair blowing in the breeze.

That was how my fourteenth summer passed: baseball in the mornings, and friends and movies and some days of peace, of hope—then back to the confessional where the smell of sweat hung in the air like spewed-out sin. Once I saw the student body president walking down the main street; he recognized my face and told me hello, and I blushed not with timidity but shame, for he walked with a confident stride, he was strong and good while I was weak. A high school girl down the street gave me a ride one day, less than an hour after I had done it, and I sat against the door at my side and could not look at her; I answered her in a low voice and said nothing on my own and I knew she thought I was shy, but that was better than the truth, for I believed if she knew what sat next to her she would recoil in disgust. When fall came I was glad, for I hoped the school days would break the pattern of my sins. But I was also afraid the Brothers could see the summer in my eyes; then it wasn't just summer, but fall and winter too, for the pattern wasn't

broken and I could not stop.

In the confessional the hardest priest was an old Dutchman who scolded and talked about manliness and will-power and once told me to stick my finger in the flame of a candle, then imagine the eternal fire of hell. I didn't do it. Father Broussard was firm, sometimes impatient, but easy compared to the Dutchman. The easiest was a young Italian, Father Grassi, who said very little: I doubt if he ever spoke to me for over thirty seconds, and he gave such light penances—three or four Hail Marys—that I began to think he couldn't understand English well enough to know what I told him.

Then it was fall again, I was fifteen, and Janet was a freshman at the college in town. She was dating Bob Mitchell, a Yankee from Michigan. He was an airman from the SAC Base, so she had to argue with Mother for the first week or so. He was a high school graduate, intelligent, and he planned to go to the University of Michigan when he got out. That's what she told Mother, who for some reason believed a man in uniform was less trustworthy than a local civilian. One week-end in October Mother and Daddy went to Baton Rouge to see L.S.U. play Ole Miss. It was a night game and they were going to spend Saturday night with friends in Baton Rouge. They left after lunch Saturday and as soon as they drove off, Janet called Bob and broke their date, then went to bed. She had the flu, she said, but she hadn't told them because Mother would have felt it was her duty to stay home.

"Would you bring me a beer?" she said. "I'll just lie in bed and drink beer and you won't have to bother with me at all."

I sat in the living room and listened to Bill Stern broadcast Notre Dame and S.M.U. I kept checking on Janet to see if she wanted another beer; she'd smile at me over her book—*The Idiot*—then shake her beer can and say yes. When the game was over I told her I was going to confession and she gave me some money for cigarettes. I didn't know how to tell her no, so I took the money but I didn't buy the cigarettes. I had enough to be ashamed of without people thinking I smoked too. When I got home I told her I had forgotten.

"Would you see if Daddy left any?"

I went into their room. On the wall above the double bed was a small black crucifix with a silver Christ (Daddy called it a graven image, but he smiled when he said it); stuck behind the crucifix was a blade from a palm frond, dried brown and crisp since Palm Sunday. I opened the top drawer of Daddy's bureau and took out the carton of Luckies. Then something else red-and-white caught my eye: the corner of a small box under his rolled-up socks. For a moment I didn't take it out. I stood looking at that corner of cardboard, knowing immediately what it was and also knowing that I wasn't learning anything new, that I had known for some indefinite and secret time, maybe a few months or a year or even two years. I stood there in the history of my knowledge, then I put down the cigarette carton and took the box of condoms from the drawer. I had slid the cover off the box and was looking

at the vertically arranged rolled condoms when I heard the bedsprings, but it was too late, her bare feet were already crossing the floor, and all I could do was raise my eyes to hers as she said: "Can't you find—" then stopped.

At first she blushed, but only for a second or two. She came into the room, gently took the box from me, put the cover on, and looked at it for a moment. Then she put it in the drawer, covered it with socks, got a pack of cigarettes and started back to her room.

"Why don't you bring me a beer," she said over her shoulder. "And we'll have a little talk."

When I brought the beer she was propped up in bed, and *The Idiot* was closed on the bedside table.

"Are you really surprised?" she said.

I shook my head.

"Does it bother you?"

"Yes."

"You're probably scrupulous. You confess enough for Eichmann, you know."

I blushed and looked away.

"Do you know that some people—theologians—believe a mortal sin is as rare as a capital crime? That most things we do aren't really that evil?"

"They must not be Catholics."

"Some of them are. Listen: Mother's only mistake is she thinks it's a sin, so she doesn't receive Communion. And I guess that's why she doesn't get a diaphragm—that would be too committed."

This sort of talk scared me, and I was relieved when she stopped. She told me not to worry about Mother and especially not to blame Daddy, not to think of him as a Protestant who had led Mother away from the Church. She said the Church was wrong. Several times she used the word love, and that night in bed I thought: love? love? For all I could think of was semen and I remembered long ago a condom lying in the dust of a country road; a line of black ants was crawling into it. I got out of bed, turned on a lamp, and read the *Angelic Warfare* prayer, which ends like this:

O God, Who has vouchsafed to defend with the blessed cord of St. Thomas those who are engaged in the terrible conflict of chastity! grant to us Thy suppliants, by his help, happily to overcome in this warfare the terrible enemy of our body and souls, that, being crowned with the lily of perpetual purity, we may deserve to receive from Thee, amongst the chaste bands of the angels, the palm of bliss . . .

Janet didn't do so well in the war. That January she and Bob Mitchell drove to Port Arthur, Texas, and got married by a justice of the peace. Then they went to Father Broussard for a Catholic marriage, but when he found out Janet was pregnant he refused. He said he didn't think this marriage would last, and he would not make it permanent in the eyes of God. My parents and I knew nothing of this until a couple of weeks later, when Bob was discharged from the Air Force. One night they told us, and two days later Janet was gone, up to Michigan; she wrote that although Bob wasn't a Catholic, he

had agreed to try again, and this time a priest had married them. Seven months after the Texas wedding she had twin sons and Mother went up there on the bus and stayed two weeks and sent us post cards from Ann Arbor.

You get over your sister's troubles, even images of her getting pregnant in a parked car, just as after a while you stop worrying about whether or not your mother is living in sin. I had my own troubles and one summer afternoon when I was sixteen, alone in the house, having done it again after receiving Communion that very morning, I lay across my bed, crying and striking my head with my fist. It was a week-day, so the priests weren't hearing confessions until next morning before Mass. I could have gone to the rectory and confessed to a priest in his office, but I could not do that, I had to have the veiled window between our faces. Finally I got up and went to the phone in the hall. I dialed the rectory and when Father Broussard answered I told him I couldn't get to church but I had to confess and I wanted to do it right now, on the phone. I barely heard the suspicious turn in his voice when he told me to come to the rectory.

"I can't," I said.

"What about tomorrow? Could you come tomorrow before Mass, or during the day?"

"I can't, Father. I can't wait that long."

"Who is this?"

For a moment we were both quiet. Then I said: "That's all right."

It was an expression we boys used, and it usually meant None of your business. I had said it in a near-whisper, not sure if I could speak another word without crying.

"All right," he said, "let me hear your confession."

I kneeled on the floor, my eyes closed, the telephone cord stretched tautly to its full length:

"Bless me Father for I have sinned; my last confession was yesterday—" now I was crying silent tears, those I hadn't spent on the bed; I could still talk but my voice was in shards—"my sins are: I committed self-abuse one time—" the word *time* trailing off, whispered into the phone and the empty hall which grew emptier still, for Father Broussard said nothing and I kneeled with eyes shut tight and the receiver hurting my hot ear until finally he said:

"All right, but I can't give you absolution over the phone. Will you come to the rectory at about three?"

"Yes Father."

"And ask for Father Broussard."

"Yes Father, thank you Father—" still holding the receiver after he hung up, my eyes shut on black and red shame; then I stood weakly and returned to the bed—I would not go to the rectory—and lay there feeling I was the only person alive on this humid summer day. I could not stop crying, and I began striking my head again. I spoke aloud to God, begging him to forgive me then kill me and spare me the further price of being a boy. Then something occurred to me: an image tossed up for my consideration, looked at, repudiated—all in an instant while my fist was poised. I saw myself sitting on the bed,

trousers dropped to the floor, my sharp-edged hunting knife in my right hand, then with one quick determined slash cutting off that autonomous penis and casting it on the floor to shrivel and die. But before my fist struck again I threw that image away. No voices told me why. I had no warning vision of pain, of bleeding to death, of being an impotent freak. I simply knew: it is there between your legs and you do not cut it off.

2

Yvonne Millet finally put it to good use. We were both nineteen, both virgins; we started dating the summer after our freshman year at the college in town. She was slender, with black hair cut short in what they called an Italian Boy. She was a Catholic, and had been taught by nuns for twelve years, but she wasn't bothered as much as I was. In the parked car we soaked our clothes with sweat, and sometimes I went home with spotted trousers which I rolled into a bundle and dropped in the basket for dry cleaning. I confessed this and petting too, and tried on our dates to keep dry, so that many nights I crawled aching and nauseated into my bed at home. I lay very still in my pain, feeling quasi-victorious: I thought Yvonne and I were committing mortal sins by merely touching each other, but at least for another night we had resisted the graver sin of orgasm. On other nights she took me with her hand or we rubbed against each other in a clothed pantomime of lovemaking until we came. This happened often enough so that for the first time in nearly seven years I stopped masturbating. And Saturday after Saturday I went proudly to confession and told of my sins with Yvonne. I confessed to Father Grassi, who still didn't talk much, but one Saturday afternoon he said: "How old are you, my friend?"

"Nineteen, Father."

"Yes. And the young girl?"

I told him she was nineteen. Now I was worried: I had avoided confessing to Father Broussard or the Dutchman because I was afraid one of them would ask about the frequency of our sins, then tell me either to be pure or break up with her and, if I did neither of these, I could not be absolved again. I had thought Father Grassi would not ask questions.

"Do you love her?"

"Yes, Father."

"At your age I think it is very hard to know if you really love someone. So I recommend that you and your girl think about getting married in two or three years' time and then, my friend, until you are ready for a short engagement and then marriage, I think each of you should go out with other people. Mostly with each other, of course, but with other people too. That may not help you to stay pure, but at least it will help you know if you love each other."

"Yes, Father."

"Because this other thing that's going on now, that's not love, you see. So you should test it in other ways."

I told him I understood and I would talk to my girl

about it. I never did, though. Once in a while Yvonne confessed but I have no idea what she told the priest, for she did not see things the way I saw them. One night, when I tried to stop us short, she pulled my hand back to its proper place and held it there until she was ready for it to leave. Then she reached to the dashboard for a cigarette, tapped it, and paused as though remembering to offer me one.

"Don't you want me to do it for you?" she said.

"No, I'm all right."

She smoked for a while, her head on my shoulder.

"Do you really think it's a worse sin when it happens to you?" she said.

"Yes."

"Why?"

I told her what the Brothers had taught me.

"You believe that?" she said. "That God gave you this seed just to have babies with, and if you waste it He'll send you to hell?"

"I guess so."

"You have wet dreams, don't you?"

"That's different. There's no will involved."

"What about me? It just happened to me, and I didn't use up any eggs or anything, so where's my sin?"

"I don't know. Maybe sins are different for girls."

"Then it wouldn't be a sin for me to masturbate either. Right? I don't, but isn't that true?"

"I never thought of that."

"Well don't. You think too much already."

"Maybe you don't think enough."

"You're right: I don't."

"I'll tell you why it's a sin," I said. "Because it's reserved for married people."

"Climax?"

"Yes."

"But you're supposed to be married to touch each other too," she said. "So why draw the line at climax? I mean, why get all worked up and then stop and think that's good?"

"You're right. We shouldn't do any of it."

"Oh, I'm not sure it's as bad as all that."

"You're not? You don't think it's a sin, what we do?"

"Maybe a little, but it's not as bad as a lot of other things."

"It's a mortal sin."

"I don't think so. I believe it's a sin to talk about a girl, but I don't think what you do with her is so bad."

"All right: if that's what you think, why don't we just go all the way?"

She sat up to throw her cigarette out the window, then she nestled her face on my chest.

"Because I'm scared," she said.

"Of getting pregnant?"

"I don't think so. I'm just scared of not being a virgin, that's all."

Then she finished our argument, won it, soaked her small handkerchief in my casuistry. Next morning at breakfast I was tired.

"You're going to ruin your health," Mother said. "It

was after one when you got home."

I flexed my bicep and said I was fine. But now Daddy was watching me from his end of the table.

"I don't care about your health," he said. "I just hope you know more than Janet did."

"Honey," Mother said.

"She got it reversed. She started babies before she was married, then quit."

That was true. Her twin boys were four now, and there were no other children. Bob had finished his undergraduate work and was going to start work on a Ph.D. in political science. Early in the summer Mother had gone up there and stayed two weeks. When she got back and talked about her visit she looked nervous, as though she were telling a lie, and a couple of times I walked into the kitchen where Mother and Daddy were talking and they stopped until I had got what I wanted and left.

"I won't get pregnant," I said.

"Neither will Yvonne," Daddy said. "As long as you keep your pants on."

Then finally one night in early fall we drove away from her house where we had parked for some time, and I knew she would not stop me, because by leaving her house she was risking questions from her parents, and by accepting that she was accepting the other risk too. I drove out to a country road, over a vibrating wooden bridge, the bayou beneath us dark as earth on that moonless night, on through black trees until I found a dirt road into the woods, keeping my hand on her small breast as I turned and cut off the ignition and headlights. In a moment she was naked on the car seat, then I was out of my clothes, even the socks, and seeing her trusting face and shockingly white body I almost dressed and took her home but then she said: Love me, Harry, love me—

The Brothers hadn't prepared me for this. If my first time had been with a whore, their training probably would have worked, for that was the sort of lust they focused on. But they were no match for Yvonne, and next morning I woke happier than I had ever been. At school that day we drank coffee and held hands and whispered. That night on the way to her house I stopped at a service station and bought a package of condoms from a machine in the men's room. That was the only time I felt guilty. But I was at least perceptive enough to know why: condoms, like masturbation and whores, were something the Brothers knew about. I left that piss-smelling room, walked into the clear autumn night, and drove to Yvonne's, where they had never been.

For the rest of the fall and a few weeks of winter, we were hot and happy lovers. I marvelled at my own joy, my lack of remorse. Once, after a few weeks, I asked her if she ever felt bad. It was late at night and we were sitting at a bar, eating oysters on the half-shell. For a moment she didn't know what I meant, then she smiled.

"I feel wonderful," she said.

She dipped her last oyster in the sauce, and leaned over the tray to eat it.

"Do we have enough money for more?" she said.

"Sure."

They were ninety cents a dozen. We watched the Negro open them, and I felt fine, eating oysters and drinking beer at one in the morning, having made love an hour ago to this pretty girl beside me. I looked at her hair and wondered if she ought to let it grow.

"Sometimes I worry, though," she said.

"Getting pregnant?"

"Nope, I never said you had to use those things. I worry about you."

"Why me?"

"Because you used to think about sins so much, and now you don't."

"That's because I love you."

She licked the red sauce from her fingers, then took my hand, squeezed it, and drank some beer.

"I'm afraid someday you'll start feeling bad again, then you'll hate me."

She was right to look for defeat in that direction, to expect me to move along clichéd routes. But, as it turned out, it wasn't guilt that finally soured us. After a couple of months I simply began noticing things.

I saw that she didn't really like football. She only enjoyed the games because they gave her a chance to dress up, and there was a band, and a crowd of students, and it was fun to keep a flask hidden while you poured bourbon into a paper cup. She cheered with the rest of us, but she wasn't cheering for the same thing. She cheered because we were there, and a young man had run very fast with a football. Once we stood up to watch an end chasing a long pass: when he dived for it, caught it, and skidded on the ground, she turned happily to me and brushed her candied apple against my sleeve. Watch out, I said. She spit on her handkerchief and rubbed the sticky wool. She loved sweets, always asked me to buy her Mounds or Hersheys at the movies, and once in a while she'd get a pimple which she tried to conceal with powder. I felt loose flesh at her waist when we danced, and walking beside her on the campus one afternoon I looked down and saw her belly pushing against her tight skirt; I lightly backhanded it and told her to suck her gut in. She stood at attention, saluted, then gave me the finger. I'm about to start my period, she said. Except for the soft flesh at her waist she was rather thin, and when she lay on her back her naked breasts spread and flattened, as though they were melting.

Around the end of November her parents spent a week-end with relatives in Houston, leaving Yvonne to take care of her sister and brother, who were fourteen and eleven. They left Saturday morning, and that night Yvonne cooked for me. She was dressed up, black cocktail dress, even heels, and she was disappointed when she saw I hadn't worn a coat. But she didn't say anything. She had already fed her brother and sister, and they were in the den at the back of the house, watching television. Yvonne had a good fire in the living room fireplace, and on the coffee table she had bourbon, a pitcher of water, a bucket of ice, and a sugar bowl.

"Like they do in Faulkner," she said, and we sat on the couch and drank a couple of toddies before dinner. Then she left me for a while and I looked into the fire, hungry and horny, and wondered what time the brother and sister would go to bed and if Yvonne would do it while they were sleeping. She came back to the living room, smiled, blushed, and said: "If you're brave enough, I am. Want to try it?"

We ate by candlelight: oyster cocktails, then a roast with rice and thick dark gravy, garlic-tinged. We had lemon ice-box pie and went back to the fireplace with second cups of coffee.

"I love to cook," she said from the record player. She put on about five long-playing albums, and I saw that we were supposed to sit at the fire and talk for the rest of the evening. The first album was Jackie Gleason, *Music, Martinis, and Memories*, and she sat beside me, took my hand, and sipped her coffee. She rested her head on the back of the couch, but I didn't like to handle a coffee cup leaning back that way, so I withdrew my hand from hers and hunched forward over the coffee table.

"I think I started cooking when I was seven," she said to my back. "No, let's see, I was eight—" I looked down at her crossed legs, the black dress just covering her knees, then looked at the fire. "When we lived in Baton Rouge. I had a children's cook book and I made something called Chili Concoction. Everybody was nice about it, and Daddy ate two helpings for supper and told me to save the rest for breakfast and he'd eat it with eggs. He did, too. Then I made something called a strawberry minute pie, and I think it was pretty good. I'll make it for you some time."

"Okay."

I was still hunched over drinking coffee, so I wasn't looking at her. I finished the coffee and she asked if I wanted more, and that irritated me, so I didn't know whether to say yes or no. I said I guess so. Then watching her leave with my cup, I disliked myself and her too. For if I wasn't worthy of the evening, then wasn't she stupid and annoyingly vulnerable to give it to me? The next album was Sinatra; I finished my coffee, then leaned back so our shoulders touched, our hands together in her lap, and we listened. Once she took a drag from my cigarette and I said Keep it, and lit another. The third album was Brubeck. She put some more ice in the bucket, I made toddies, and she asked if I understood *The Bear*. I shrugged and said probably not. She had finished it the day before, and she started talking about it.

"Hey," I said. "When are they going to sleep?"

She was surprised, and again I disliked myself and her too. Then she was hurt, and she looked at her lap and said she didn't know, but she couldn't make love anyway, not here in the house, even if they were sleeping.

"We can leave for a while," I said. "We won't go far."

She kept looking at her lap, at our clasped hands.

"They'll be all right," I said.

Then she looked into my eyes and I looked away and she said: "Okay, I'll tell them."

When she came back with a coat over her arm I was

waiting at the door, my jacket zipped, the car key in my hand.

We broke up in January, about a week after New Year's. I don't recall whether we fought, or kissed goodbye, or sat in a car staring mutely out the windows. But I do remember when the end started; or, rather, when Yvonne decided to recognize it.

On New Year's Eve a friend of ours gave a party. His parents were out of town, so everyone got drunk. It was an opportunity you felt obliged not to pass up. Two or three girls got sick and had to have their faces washed and be walked outside in the cold air. When Yvonne got drunk it was a pleasant drunk, and I took her upstairs. I think no one noticed: it was past midnight, and people were hard to account for. We lay on the bed in the master bedroom, Yvonne with her skirt pulled up, her pants off, while I performed in shirt, sweater, and socks. She was quiet as we stood in the dark room, taking our pants off, and she didn't answer my whispered Happy New Year as we began to make love, for the first time, on a bed. Then, moving beneath me, she said in a voice so incongruous with her body that I almost softened but quickly got it back, shutting my ears to what I had heard: This is all we ever do, Harry—this is all we ever do.

The other thing I remember about that night is a time around three in the morning. A girl was cooking hamburgers, I was standing in the kitchen doorway talking to some boys, and Yvonne was sitting alone at the kitchen table. There were other people talking in the kitchen, but she wasn't listening; she moved only to tap ashes and draw on her cigarette, then exhaled into the space that held her gaze. She looked older than twenty, quite lonely and sad, and I pitied her. But there was something else: I knew she would never make love to me again. Maybe that is why, as a last form of possession, I told. It could not have been more than an hour later, I was drunker, and in the bathroom I one-upped three friends who were bragging about feeling tits of drunken girls. I told them I had taken Yvonne upstairs and screwed her. To add history to it, I even told them what she had said.

3

Waiting in line for my first confession in five months I felt some guilt but I wasn't at all afraid. I only had to confess sexual intercourse, and there was nothing shameful about that, nothing unnatural. It was a man's sin. Father Broussard warned me never to see this girl again (that's what he called her: this girl), for a man is weak and he needs much grace to turn away from a girl who will give him her body. He said I must understand it was a serious sin because sexual intercourse was given by God to married couples for the procreation of children and we had stolen it and used it wrongfully, for physical pleasure, which was its secondary purpose. I knew that in some way I had sinned, but Father Broussard's definition of that sin fell short and did not sound at all like what I had

done with Yvonne. So when I left the confessional I still felt unforgiven.

The campus was not a very large one, but it was large enough so you could avoid seeing someone. I stopped going to the student center for coffee, and we had no classes together; we only saw each other once in a while, usually from a distance, walking between buildings. We exchanged waves and the sort of smile you cut into your face at times like that. The town was small too, so occasionally I saw her driving around, looking for a parking place or something. Then after a while I wanted to see her, and I started going to the student center again, but she didn't drink coffee there anymore. In a week or so I realized that I didn't really want to see her: I wanted her to be happy, and if I saw her there was nothing I could say to help that.

Soon I was back to the old private vice, though now it didn't seem a vice but an indulgence, not as serious as smoking or even drinking, closer to eating an ice cream sundae before bed every night. That was how I felt about it, like I had eaten two scoops of ice cream with thick hot fudge on it, and after a couple of bites it wasn't good anymore but I finished it anyway, thinking of calories. It was a boring little performance and it didn't seem worth thinking about, one way or the other. But I told it in the confessional, so I could still receive the Eucharist. Then one day in spring I told the number of my sins as though I were telling the date of my birth, my height, and weight, and Father Broussard said quickly and sternly: "Are you sorry for these sins?"

"Yes, Father," I said, but then I knew it was a lie. He was asking me if I had a firm resolve to avoid this sin in the future when I said: "No, Father."

"No what? You can't avoid it?"

"I mean no Father, I'm not really sorry. I don't even think it's a sin."

"Oh, I see. You don't have the discipline to stop, so you've decided it's not a sin. Just like that, you've countermanded God's law. Do you want absolution?"

"Yes, Father. I want to receive Communion."

"You can't. You're living in mortal sin, and I cannot absolve you while you keep this attitude. I want you to think very seriously—"

But I wasn't listening. I was looking at the crucifix and waiting for his voice to stop so I could leave politely and try to figure out what to do next. Then he stopped talking, and I said: "Yes, Father."

"What?" he said. "What?"

I went quickly through the curtains, out of the confessional, out of the church.

On Sundays I went to Mass but did not receive the Eucharist. I thought I could but I was afraid that as soon as the Host touched my tongue I would suddenly realize I had been wrong, and then I'd be receiving Christ with mortal sin on my soul. Mother didn't receive either. I prayed for her and hoped she'd soon have peace, even if it meant early menopause. By now I agreed with Janet, and I wished she'd write Mother a letter and convince her that she wasn't evil. I thought Mother was probably

praying for Janet, who had gone five years without bearing a child.

It was June, school was out, and I did not see Yvonne at all. I was working with a surveying crew, running a hundred foot chain through my fingers, cutting trails with a machete, eating big lunches from paper bags, and waiting for something to happen. There were two alternatives, and I wasn't phony enough for the first or brave enough for the second: I could start confessing again, the way I used to, or I could ignore the confessional and simply receive Communion. But nothing happened and each Sunday I stayed with Mother in the pew while the others went up to the altar rail.

Then Janet came home. She wrote that Bob had left her, had moved in with his girl friend—a graduate student—and she and the boys were coming home on the bus. That was the news waiting for me when I got home from work, Mother handing me the letter as I came through the front door, both of them watching me as I read it. Then Daddy cursed, Mother started crying again, and I took a beer out to the front porch. After a while Daddy came out too and we sat without talking and drank beer until Mother called us to supper. Daddy said “That son of a bitch,” and we went inside.

By the time Janet and the boys rode the bus home from Ann Arbor, Mother was worried about something else: the Church, because now Janet was twenty-three years old and getting a divorce and if she ever married again she was out of the Church. Unless Bob died, and Daddy said he didn't care what the Church thought about divorce, but it seemed a good enough reason for him to go up to Ann Arbor, Michigan, and shoot Bob Mitchell between the eyes. So while Janet and Paul and Lee were riding south on the Greyhound, Mother was going to daily Mass and praying for some answer to Janet's future.

But Janet had already taken care of that too. When she got off the bus I knew she'd be getting married again someday: she had gained about ten pounds, probably from all that cheap food while Bob went to school, but she had always been on the lean side anyway and now she looked better than I remembered. Her hair was long, about halfway down her back. The boys were five years old now, and I was glad she hadn't had anymore, because they seemed to be good little boys and not enough to scare off a man. We took them home—it was a Friday night—and Daddy gave Janet a tall drink of bourbon and everybody talked as though nothing had happened. Then we ate some shrimp *etouffee* and after supper, when the boys were in bed and the rest of us were in the living room, Janet said by God it was the best meal she had had in five years, and next time she was going to marry a man who liked Louisiana cooking. When she saw the quick look in Mother's eyes, she said: “We didn't get married in the Church, Mama. I just told you we did so you wouldn't worry.”

“You *didn't*?”

“Bob was so mad at Father Broussard he wouldn't try again. He's not a Catholic, you know.”

“There's more wrong with him than that,” Daddy said.

“So I can still get married in the Church,” Janet said. “To somebody else.”

“But Janet—”

“Wait,” Daddy said. “Wait. You've been praying for days so Janet could stop living with that son of a bitch and still save her soul. Now you got it—right?”

“But—”

“Right?”

“Well,” Mother said, “I guess so.”

They went to bed about an hour past their usual time, but Janet and I stayed up drinking gin-and-tonic in the kitchen, with the door closed so we wouldn't keep anybody awake. At first she just talked about how glad she was to be home, even if the first sign of it was the Negroes going to the back of the bus. She loved this hot old sticky night, she said, and the June bugs thumping against the screen and she had forgot how cigarettes get soft down here in the humid air. Finally she talked about Bob; she didn't think he had ever loved her, he had started playing around their first year up there, and it had gone on for five years more or less; near the end she had even done it too, had a boy friend, but it didn't help her survive at all, it only made things worse, and now at least she felt clean and tough and she thought that was the first step toward hope.

The stupid thing was she still loved the philandering son of a bitch. That was the only time she cried, when she said that, but she didn't even cry long enough for me to get up and go to her side of the table and hold her or something: when I was half out of my chair she was already waving me back in it, shaking her head and wiping her eyes, and the tears that had filled them for a moment were gone. Then she cheered up and asked if I'd drive her around tomorrow, down the main street and everything, and I said sure and asked her if she was still a Catholic.

“Don't tell Mother this,” she said. “She's confused enough already. I went to Communion every Sunday, except when I was having that stupid affair, and I only felt sinful then because he loved me and I was using him. But before that and after that, I received.”

“You can't,” I said. “Not while you're married out of the Church.”

“Maybe I'm wrong, but I don't think the Church is so smart about sex. Bob wouldn't get the marriage blessed, so a priest would have told me to leave him. I loved him, though, and for a long time I thought he loved me, needed me—so I stayed with him and tried to keep peace and bring up my sons. And the Eucharist is the sacrament of love and I needed it very badly those five years and nobody can keep me away.”

I got up and took our glasses and made drinks. When I turned from the sink she was watching me.

“Do you still go to confession so much?” she said.

I sat down, avoiding her eyes, then I thought what the hell, if you can't tell Janet you can't tell anybody. So looking at the screen door and the bugs thumping from

the dark outside I told her how it was in high school and about Yvonne, though I didn't tell her name, and my aborted confession to Father Broussard. She was kind to me, busying herself with cigarettes and her drink while I talked. Then she said: "You're right, Harry. You're absolutely right."

"You really think so?"

"I know this much: too many of those celibates teach sex the way it is for them. They make it introverted, so you come out of their schools believing sex is something between you and yourself, or between you and God. Instead of between you and other people. Like my affair. It wasn't wrong because I was married. Hell, Bob didn't care, in fact he was glad because it gave him more freedom. It was wrong because I hurt the guy." A Yankee word on her tongue, *guy*, and she even said it with that accent from up there among snow and lakes. "If Bob had stayed home and taken a *Playboy* to the bathroom once in a while I might still have a husband. So if that's a sin, I don't understand sin."

"Well," I said. Then looking at her, I grinned and it kept spreading and turned into a laugh. "You're something, all right," I said. "Old Janet, you're something."

But I still wasn't the renegade Janet was, I wanted absolution from a priest, and next morning while Mother and Daddy were happily teasing us about our hangovers, I decided to get it done. That afternoon I called Father Grassi, then told Janet where I was going, and that I would drive her around town when I got back. Father Grassi answered the door at the rectory; he was wearing a white shirt with his black trousers, a small man with a ruddy face and dark whiskers. I asked if I could speak to him in his office.

"I think so," he said. "Do you come from the Pope?"

"No, Father. I just want to confess."

"So it's you who will be the saint today, not me. Yes, come in."

He led me to his office, put his stole around his neck, and sat in the swivel chair behind his desk; I kneeled beside him on the carpet, and he shielded his face with his hand, as though we were in the confessional and he could not see me. I whispered "Bless me Father, for I have sinned," my hands clasped at my waist, my head bowed. "My last confession was six weeks ago, but I was refused absolution. By Father Broussard."

"Is that so? You don't look like a very bad young man to me. Are you some kind of criminal?"

"I confessed masturbation, Father."

"Yes? Then what?"

"I told him I didn't think it was a sin."

"I see. Well, poor Father Broussard: I'd be confused too, if you confessed something as a sin and then said you didn't think it was a sin. You should take better care of your priests, my friend."

I opened my eyes: his hand was still in place on his cheek, and he was looking straight ahead, over his desk at the bookshelf against the wall.

"I guess so," I said. "And now I'm bothering you."

"Oh no: you're no trouble. The only disappointment is you weren't sent by the Pope. But since that's the way it is, then we may just as well talk about sins. We had in the seminary a book of moral theology and in that book, my friend, it was written that masturbation was worse than rape, because at least rape was the carrying out of a natural instinct. What about that?"

"Do you believe that, Father?"

"Do you?"

"No, Father."

"Neither do I. I burned the book when I left the seminary, but not only for that reason. The book also said, among other things, let the buyer beware. So you tell me about sin and we will educate each other."

"I went to the Brothers' school."

"Ah, yes. Nice fellows, those Brothers."

"Yes, Father. But I think they concentrated too much on the body. One's own body, I mean. And back then I believed it all, and one day I even wanted to mutilate myself. Then last fall I had a girl."

"What does that mean, you had a girl? You mean you were lovers?"

"Yes, Father. But I shouldn't have had a girl, because I believed my semen was the most important part of sex, so the first time I made love with her I was waiting for it, like my soul was listening for it—you see? Because I wouldn't know how I felt about her until I knew how I felt about ejaculating with her."

"And how did you feel? Did you want to mutilate yourself with a can opener, or maybe something worse?"

"I was happy, Father."

"Yes."

"So after that we were lovers. Or she was, but I wasn't. I was just happy because I could ejaculate without hating myself, so I was still masturbating, you see, but with her—Does that make sense?"

"Oh yes, my friend. I've known that since I left the seminary. Always there is too much talk of self-abuse. You see, even the term is a bad one. Have you finished your confession?"

"I want to confess about the girl again, because when I confessed it before it wasn't right. I slept with her without loving her and the last time I slept with her I told some boys about it."

"Yes. Anything else?"

"No, Father."

"Good. There is a line in St. John that I like very much. It is Christ praying to the Father and He says: 'I do not pray that You take them out of the world, but that You keep them from evil.' Do you understand that?"

"I think so, Father."

"Then for your penance, say alleluia three times."

Next afternoon Janet and I took her boys crabbing. We had an ice chest of beer and we set it under the small pavilion at the center of the wharf, then I put out six crab lines, tying them to the guard rail. I remembered the summer before she got married Janet and I had gone

crabbing then cooked them for the family: we had a large pot of water on the stove and when the water was boiling I held the gunny sack of live crabs over it and they came falling out, splashing into the water; they worked their claws, moved sluggishly, then died. And Janet had said: *I keep waiting for them to scream.*

It was a hot day, up in the nineties. Someone was water-skiing on the lake, which was salt-water and connected by canal to the Gulf, but we had the wharf to ourselves, and we drank beer in the shade while Paul and Lee did the crabbing. They lost the first couple, so I left the pavilion and squatted at the next line. The boys flanked me, lying on their bellies and looking down where the line went into the dark water; they had their shirts off, and their hot tan shoulders and arms brushed my legs. I gently pulled the line up until we saw a crab just below the surface, swimming and nibbling at the chunk of ham.

"Okay, Lee. Put the net down in the water, then bring it up under him so you don't knock him away."

He lowered the pole and scooped the net slowly under the crab.

"I got him!"

"That's it. You just have to go slow, that's all."

He stood and lifted the net and laid it on the wharf.

"Look how big," Paul said.

"He's a good one," I said. "Put him in the sack."

But they crouched over the net, watching the crab push his claws through.

"Poor little crab," Lee said. "You're going to die."

"Does it hurt 'em, Harry?" Paul said.

"I don't know."

"It'd hurt me," he said.

"I guess it does, for a second or two."

"How long's a second?" Lee said.

I pinched his arm.

"About like that."

"That's not too long," he said.

"No. Put him in the sack now, and catch some more."

I went back to my beer on the bench. Paul was still crouching over the crab, poking a finger at its back. Then Lee held open the gunny sack and Paul turned the net over and shook it and the crab fell in.

"Goodbye, big crab," he said.

"Goodbye, poor crab," Lee said.

They went to another line. For a couple of hours, talking to Janet, I watched them and listened to their bare feet on the wharf and their voices as they told each crab goodbye. Sometimes one of them would stop and look across the water and pull at his pecker, and I remembered that day hot as this one when I was sixteen and I wanted to cut mine off. I reached deep under the ice and got a cold beer for Janet and I thought of Yvonne sitting at that kitchen table at three in the morning, tired, her lipstick worn off, her eyes fixed on a space between the people in the room. Then I looked at the boys lying on their bellies and reaching down for another crab, and I hoped they would grow well, those strong little bodies, those kind hearts.

ROSELLEN BROWN

1963

Night upon night
clouds swam down the sky
in a black current.
Now I know where the fish hid
live and helpless
going voiceless over the world's edge.

If (people were to say)
the fish had carried flowers
which were (I remember) profuse that year,
and therefore inexpensive;
or something edged with mother-of-pearl;
or perhaps, if nothing frivolous, then
a book; or a reed attesting to
skill at a wind instrument —

but they were themselves,
bare, every third or fourth
lit as if from within,
travelling beneath a streak,
cunning red or silver,
shaped and greased for speed.
Bearing (if anything) something jerry-built
and undeniably personal.

The clouds were fog off the Pacific,
washed up on the sky's far edge.
Painlessly they tore apart,
and they were never less (I remember)
than beautiful.

Now it seems there were fish
chased over the edge; they
had no hands to carry the ransom.
Their scales came down on the underside
of every rain.
When I splashed my feet,
I must have taken them home
in my shoes.

stephen glauber

THE DILEMMA OF PUBLIC TELEVISION

Television is America's most popular pastime. More than sex, reading, sports, or eating, television occupies the major part of the average person's non-working hours. It cuts across ethnic, income, any lines you can name, reaching and affecting American society to awesome degrees that we are only beginning to understand.

The average citizen watches television 42 hours a week during November and December—the two peak months of television viewing—and at only a slightly lower rate the rest of the year. Ninety per cent of American households with an income of less than \$5,000 manage somehow to have a television set. Not only does television attract a staggeringly large audience, but that audience believes in the veracity of the medium. More people rely on television for their news information than rely on any other news source. And whatever culture most people know about comes to them on television.

Given television's impact, the record of most commercial broadcasters is sadly disappointing. Programs in the political affairs area are mainly restricted to news summaries with little effort made to provide viewers with substantial background information. The daily noises carry the day, and nobody—as a result of watching television—knows more about a problem than he did before. Penetrating analysis is a rarity and almost always concerns issues considered relatively “safe.” As for cultural affairs programs, the need to keep the audience from switching to “Bonanza” has resulted in a scarcity of first rate programs. Perhaps a couple of plays a year, or a Sunday afternoon nod to some gnawing obligation, but as to regularly scheduled high caliber shows, the viewer simply will not find them on prime time commercial television.

The major—but by no means only—reason for the failure of commercial television to provide consistent levels of high quality programming is money. Commercial stations make their money by selling time to advertisers. Advertisers' costs are based principally on ratings. The more people who watch, the higher the advertising rate. As audiences for political or quality programs are generally smaller than for light entertainment shows, the commercial broadcaster happily complies with the public wish.

When the commercial broadcaster does opt for a news program in place of a predictable light show, pressure to make it snappy so that it will hold the viewer is great. Thus the charge that news programming is sensational. Coverage of the Vietnam War—“the first television war”—for example, has been attacked for the prevalence of bloody action scenes. It is not that network management orders correspondents to film the gore, but the eventual footage broadcast after passing through various editors' hands turns out to be the action stuff—not the less-visual but equally important footage dealing with the political and social issues. Be that as it may, at least one does see some footage about Vietnam. But consider the thousands of important actions and decisions that are not mentioned on television because there is no time, or because the events are not visually attractive or even capable of being photographed. And what of the many issues not touched upon, or treated only lightly, so as not to offend? It was only a couple of years ago that one could see no responsible-looking spokesmen question America's participation in the Vietnam War. Pressures from the gun lobby or the White House, for example, must be dealt with most sensitively by broadcasters because they know which side their bread is buttered on.

Aside from special events coverage (such as the fantastic coverage of the moon landing), the viewer can expect the usual host of palliative programming. This state of affairs is underlined by a column that appeared in *Variety* on July 9:

‘HEE-HAW’ HAS THE LAST LAUGH

“Hee-Haw,” the CBS-TV summertime filler which was widely hooted by the big city critics when it preemed last month, is a winner. This Sunday night hour has virtually clinched a spot on the CBS schedule as a midseason replacement. In fact, a key network exec said privately that he wished it were possible to slip the rustic comedy into the September starting lineup.

An attorney living in New York City, STEPHEN GLAUBER is General Counsel for National Educational Television.

The show, which has been called a "yokel Laugh-In" and drew some of the worst critical blasts in years, has been strictly hitsville in the ratings since it started. It opened in the Sunday 9 p.m. hour (formerly the Smothers Brothers) with a 40 share and since then has held up in the high 30s. Where audience acceptance is concerned, the show is a known quantity vis-a-vis a number of fall freshmen that are only question marks.

CBS is not deep into midseason replacement shows, and the web has confirmed that "Hee-Haw" now stands first in line to go in for a loser. A web source disclosed that [the producers] have been asked to work at tempering the bumpkin flavor of the humor with a bit more sophistication.

Commercial television has got to give the people—most people, that is—what they want. But what of the viewer who is attracted by quality programming? Must he sit in the dark?

Do we even care if he sits in the dark? After all, he is a mere "other," or perhaps at best part of a Two or Five share in the rating chart. Would we like to convince the ordinary viewer who is mesmerized by "Hee-Haw" or a comparable program that he might actually enjoy or be benefitted beyond merely filling his evening hours by seeing Arlo Guthrie tell a story of Moses and marijuana, or hear why a painter paints, or understand why we fear or hate or love, or learn how to pot a plant? And, too, what about the viewer who finds offensive the half truths of commercials or their banal unimportance?

Nobody has yet proved that the vast majority ought not to be catered to, and most would agree that one function of commercial television is to make money. But for an alternative where does the viewer go?

This alternative must lie in noncommercial ("public") television. Free of commercials and of the need to earn healthy profits for shareholders and managers, and free from sponsors' fears of stepping on toes, public television has magnificent opportunities to be independent, irrelevant, and bold.

In 1953, the first public television station went on the air. Two years later there were 17 stations; by 1960, there were 51; by 1965, 113, and today approximately 200. During daytime hours these stations provide instructional programs; for example, a program specifically designed to teach a second grade art class may be followed by a college physics course. These classes are an invaluable study tool for more than 10,000,000 students.

For the general public it is the evening hours that provide the television. These programs come from a variety of sources. Some are locally produced, some are received from other local stations in exchange for its programs, and others come from commercial stations and various small sources. But the bulk of adult programs—more than fifty per cent—come from National Educational Television (NET).

NET was organized as a non-profit corporation in 1952 and began by establishing a program exchange service. That first year of operation, the program service consisted mainly of programs produced by local stations, augmented by acquisitions from outside sources. The service was enlarged and expanded in 1958, when the Ford Foundation undertook direct financing and the operation was moved from Ann Arbor, Michigan, to New York City. The Ford Foundation, in fact, has been the backbone of public television financing, having contributed more than \$120,000,000 to various organizations up to 1967, and it continues to play a major role in public television development. In the last few years, NET received \$6,000,000 annually from the Ford Foundation and \$2,000,000 from other sources.

While NET does not always reach the mark it aims for, much of the programming is very good. For example, while the commercial networks cannot devote prime time to background stories and analyses of the news, the NET series "News in Perspective" provides such material every other Wednesday at 8 p.m. (EST). Chaired by Clifton Daniel, Managing Editor of the *New York Times*, it usually features Tom Wicker and Max Frankel, two of the *Times*' best known writers. Another series that commercial stations understandably would find difficult to do is "Your Dollar's Worth," well-researched documentaries dealing with products and services that the consumer is likely to purchase. This year there have been programs about over-the-counter pills, the sad state of automobile repairs, tour packages, and taxes. Every Monday night "NET Journal" presents various issues in the public affairs area. Some of these programs have been "What Harvest for the Reaper," a study on migrant workers which resulted in state legislation and federal investigation into slavish conditions; "Appalachia," an examination of those left behind in the mines and hills of Kentucky and West Virginia, and a program on chemical and biological warfare—an acquisition from the BBC which was barely reviewed but was picked up and treated not so well or so forthrightly first on NBC's "First Tuesday," and then later by CBS on "Sixty Minutes." (These programs themselves with their "magazine format" seem a natural outgrowth of the Public Broadcast Laboratory, mentioned below).

Occasionally, NET and its affiliates must ignore complaints in order to broadcast this series—as when, in spite of protests by 33 members of the House of Representatives, they broadcast a sympathetic film about North Vietnam by Felix Greene. And, despite the refusal of some Southern affiliates to broadcast "Black Journal," NET continues to produce this series in which black producers deal with issues of importance to black communities.

On the cultural side, NET has produced programs in the arts, humanities, and sciences falling into two major categories: performances and documentaries. "NET Playhouse," a weekly drama series, was recently awarded an Emmy honoring such productions as Megan Terry's "Home," Jack Richardson's "The Prodigal," and

Ronald Ribman's "Journey of a Fifth Horse" (with Dustin Hoffman in his first big role). Other series have included "Creative Person," documentaries and interviews with leading artists such as Jasper Johns, Robert Osborne, and King Vidor; "NET Festival," including films by leading independent directors; symphony concerts, and musical recitals. Scientific developments and phenomena are explored in the weekly series "Spectrum." Specials have included "Lincoln Center/Stage 5: Five Ballets of the Five Senses," consisting of five commissioned musical scores, choreographed by John Butler and produced in cooperation with the Lincoln Center of the Performing Arts.

The impact of public television, however, has not yet created a strong national following. One reason for this failure is—as in the case of commercial television—money. But whereas commercial television's is the *quest* for greater and greater profits, public television's problem is the *lack* of money. To illustrate, in the fiscal year 1965-66, the then 124 public television stations received a total of \$60,000,000 (An average of \$483,833 per station). The bulk of this was spent for instructional programming, facilities, and equipment. When one compares this with a commercial hour which costs approximately \$120,000 to make, or to ABC's new weekly series, "The Survivors," which was budgeted for nearly \$8,000,000 and may go beyond this figure by the time it is completed, the disparity—and desperation—is obvious.

The scarcity of funds has also prevented effective promotional notices about the stations' programming. While CBS spent over \$100,000 promoting its superb production of "Death of a Salesman," dramas presented on public television must be searched for and discovered by the viewers. Furthermore, until 1969, public television's budget did not permit a simultaneous broadcast across the country. Instead, NET's programs were mailed from one station to the next, resulting in a program's being seen in various cities over many months and thus preventing a national promotional announcement. Many evening programs are now interconnected although these hours are occasionally preempted by the common carrier—thus an NET program on the ABM issue was preempted last spring in favor of a regional basketball game.

This same lack of money has also prevented many stations from producing quality programs of special local interest, and made it difficult for them to maintain an independent position. Some stations are licensed by the State, and the local legislators watch the station's every move. Other stations have so little money that they fear offending any potential friend. When a strong and creative public television station such as KQED in San Francisco interviewed San Francisco State's President Hayakawa, and he, in a moment of pique, left the studio objecting to strong questions, the station's financial support dropped quickly. (It should be noted that KQED has as strong local support as any public television station in the country and has the singular record, in-

cidentally, of actually advising its viewers to watch the Kennedy-Nixon debates on another network, closing its station down during the four debates.)

In the last two years, public television has felt a flurry of activity that may make or break it. The first important development was the creation of Public Broadcast Laboratory (PBL). Organized in 1967 with a \$15,000,000 grant from the Ford Foundation, PBL was formulated as a two-year experiment to prove that, given adequate funding, public television could show what the possibilities of the medium were. Unfortunately, PBL got off on the wrong foot by taking the position that both commercial television and public television had done a poor job, and that PBL would show them how to do it right. "The competition" waited in the wings, and when PBL's early programming was good but not dazzling, the reaction was vehement. The public had been oversold. As with the Edsel, the product had features seen before, and it was bound to fail. Despite many evenings of excellent programming—such as the first thorough examination of overspending by the Defense Department and the validity of the ABM, an Emmy-winning documentary by Fredrick Wiseman about police, and an analysis concluding that there would be electrical power failures this summer (broadcast in spite of pressures from the utilities suggesting that they would cease contributing to several stations)—the PBL experiment was not renewed.

The second development was the funding of the Children's Television Workshop (CTW), an independent division of NET which will begin broadcasting daily programs geared to the preschool child. The need for CTW was emphasized by Joan Cooney, now its director, who observed that preschool children, even those who cannot read, memorize countless commercials perfectly and watch television an average of 54.1 hours per week—twelve hours more than the average for all television viewers. Utilizing the services of educators, animators, and producers, CTW's completed segments have fascinated all who have seen them. They will appear on television beginning this fall.

The final addition to the whirlwind was the enactment of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967. This followed a study by the Carnegie Commission on Education Television, which noted the lack of adequate financing for public television and recommended that Congress establish a federally chartered nongovernmental corporation, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), to receive and disburse governmental and private funds to improve public television programming. The Act authorized appropriations of \$10,500,000 up to June 30, 1968, an additional \$12,500,000 to June 30, 1969, and another sum of \$15,000,000 to June 30, 1970. Much of this money has not yet been appropriated by Congress.

The existence of CPB has forced all concerned to reexamine the organization and purposes of public television. CPB has the mandate to facilitate the development of public television, and how it chooses to use that mandate will effect all aspects of public broadcasting. It is

currently making funds available to some stations for the production of specified programs. All the stations, of course, want this money. Those that get it will be strengthened by it, and because of the nature of current distribution by CPB, the type of programs the stations are making are the ones that CPB approves of and supports.

Of immediate concern is the extent of influence CPB has on programming. Whom it gives funds to obviously has an impact. Of more subtle—but of greater importance—is its congressional authorization “to assist in the establishment and development of one or more systems of interconnection to be used for the distribution of educational television . . . programs . . .” In order for a program to be shown nationally, it must be broadcast over this system of interconnection unless it is to be bicycled around the country from station to station. The statutory language just referred to prevents CPB from operating the system itself, but it will have a central role in controlling the system’s operations since it pays the bills. If CPB uses its influence, it will be making programming decisions daily, for the organization that determines what programs are broadcast via interconnection, by definition determines program content for public television.

This result is troublesome, as CPB is a federally-created-and-supported organization, and its financing is subject to annual congressional review. If CPB does somehow create a truly independent interconnection system, it will probably be headed by a committee representing stations, CPB, and other interests in public television. Committee decisions of this nature are almost necessarily disastrous. No matter how well constituted they are, committees cannot make judgments involving artistic taste. The functionary nature of a committee is to compromise. And compromise cannot go hand in hand with boldness and imagination.

The best way to run an interconnection system would be to have a strong production facility bear the major responsibility for producing as well as deciding what programs are put on the interconnecting system. This would place the responsibility on an organization with programming expertise and keep the responsibility for program decisions in one place; hopefully, the clearer delineation of accountability would result in a clearer exercise of responsibility.

One sad feature of the Public Broadcast Act is its prohibition to public broadcasters against editorializing. While it is understandable that a television system underwritten by Congress should not be an editorial arm of the government, this restriction, however, may prevent public broadcasting stations from presenting responsible views. It should be remembered that stations are obligated to grant equal time when broadcasting editorials, so the justice of a special restraint for public stations as opposed to commercial stations is arguable. To prevent public television from becoming a voice of the government—a domestic USIA—the answer is not to censor it but to provide public television with a sound financial base and an independence from political pressures.

In any case, solid funding must be supplied before public television can have the impact it should. The government is just beginning to follow the lead of various countries in Europe and throughout the world in establishing a government-supported television system. If the funding base provided is one continually subjected to review by Congress, there may be no need for public television; its reasons for existence—to provide bold, independent, irreverent television programming—may be destroyed.

Other financial proposals have been made. The Ford Foundation suggested that a domestic satellite system be launched to carry commercial and public television signals. Ford argued that the satellite would save commercial broadcasters millions of dollars; the amounts saved by these broadcasters would be given to public television. The Carnegie Commission urged that an excise tax be levied on each new television set sold, with the revenue going to public television.

Whatever the funding scheme, the financial dilemma must be solved. The goal is nearer than before, but the reasons for public television’s existence are increasing with the complexities and developments in America and the world. We will all lose if it fails, or all become richer by its success.

RICHARD JACKSON

DISTANCES

In the long shadows of the grass
the nights are falling
september like a burning confetti

the stars rise slowly up
the sides of trees
september remember her wish to be
planted among the flowers

her kite shaking its braided sheet
like september
the echo of orange forests
in an old fireplace

september in a time when the petals
of the tall daisies hang
like mops under a frightened moon.

by Scott Craig

Recently a college senior majoring in broadcasting came to the NBC studios in Chicago to ask me about the kind of future she might expect in the field of television documentaries. I picked up a copy of *Variety* that I had just been reading and showed her an article which stated that this has been the worst year yet for television documentaries. Each year, said *Variety* (May 14, 1969), there have been fewer and fewer of them, and those currently being produced are often so "soft" that their value is questionable. The plain fact of the matter is that documentaries cost money (far more than the reruns of "I Love Lucy") and, because they seldom draw giant ratings, they are expendable. Things have now reached the point where one network executive was quoted by *Variety* as saying, "They've got \$250,000 worth of television producers sitting around here doing nothing." I assume that's enough idle, high-powered producers to disenchant most college seniors.

If indeed the network documentary is headed down the path of the buffalo and the whooping crane, the oases in this desert then seem to be found in certain local stations in certain local markets. A recent survey in Broadcasting Magazine (July 23, 1969) comes to that conclusion. The article shows, for example, that the NBC-owned station in Chicago, WMAQ-TV is one of the most active stations in the country. Fortunately, WMAQ-TV is where I am employed as a producer of television documentaries. In my job, I work with good budgets on subject matter that I think is meaningful. The programs are aired in prime time where there is a potential for a large audience. For the most part, the sales department has found local advertisers eager to sponsor these efforts—though I am aware that this situation is perhaps not representative of the industry at large.

The most refreshing thing about documentaries, as far as I am concerned, is that none is typical. I have never found a definition for the word "documentary" that covers all of the possibilities. Likewise I find great difficulty in separating the meaning of such terms as "news", "public affairs", "program", "show", and "special." (I don't think I'm alone in confusion over such terms. I recently heard a group of film makers arguing about what constituted "true *verite*.") The lack of specific definition, however, doesn't bother me. Over the course of the last ten years I have made more than seventy "somethings" that have been called documentaries, and in the course of doing it I have received a liberal education that I never knew existed when I was in college getting a liberal education.

Recently Merv Griffin said: "There are two kinds of documentaries: the cultural documentary and the news

documentary. The cultural documentary shows you what you're missing by staying home watching television. And the news documentary makes you realize that instead of sitting in front of your television set, you should be out doing something about what you're looking at." The purpose of this article, therefore, is to tell you about the making of a cultural documentary. I produced the film; Joseph Sander, whose observations follow, wrote the script.

The project started in the summer of 1967 at a time when I was deeply involved in the production of a ninety-minute documentary about the quality of justice in the Circuit Court of Cook County. This was a lengthy, complicated project that would eventually occupy my time for a year-and-a-half—living in courtrooms and jails, talking to hundreds of lawyers, defendants, and judges. It was refreshing, therefore, to learn that my next assignment would be entirely different: "to make an historical film about Illinois." This was the assignment, no more specific than that. It was made clear that I was to initiate research, determine the course of the film, then submit a treatment to my superiors at NBC-Chicago.

At that time Illinois was involved in a sesquicentennial celebration. Several films had already been made on the general subject of Illinois history, but it appeared to me that these efforts had tried the "shot-gun buck-shot" approach, attempting to touch all areas of the state at once. These films had once again recounted the well-known stories about Abraham Lincoln. Although Lincoln still makes great copy, I was fearful that Illinois had become so Lincoln-rich that it was history-poor.

two from chicago on "three from illinois"

A research assistant and I began by selecting and tackling a large reading list of Illinois history. I remember that the assistant asked me what I was looking for and I answered, "Certainly something other than Abraham Lincoln must have happened in Illinois." My goal was to find three or four significant stories to treat in some depth over the course of an hour film.

As possible stories developed from our reading, I mapped an itinerary for myself and, between visits to courtrooms and judges' chambers on my other project, I began to take excursions into the countryside looking at locations. For example I went to Nauvoo, the site where Joseph Smith tried to build his promised land and from which the Mormons were eventually driven by mobs westward across the Mississippi. I visited Alton and

(Continued on page 35)

SCOTT CRAIG has produced documentaries for commercial television for ten years. His films have won numerous awards, including several Emmy's and, last year, the Silver Gavel award of the American Bar Association.

by Joseph Sander

"Television," I remember the late Fred Allen saying, "is called a medium because nothing is ever well done." Being young, poor and highly mobile at that time, I had little personal TV viewing experience, and I just took the words of the old master as gospel. For years I paid very little attention to the industry.

However, from my sparse contact with what must now be called "the early days" I can remember going into saloons on Saturday nights for the express purpose of watching Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca; in my circle, saloons were the only places that could afford television sets, and the price of a beer brought this cultural advantage into my range. The value of those evenings will always be treasured, and I do not think television comedy has ever again reached that mark.

Some years later, I recall being invited to a neighbor's home and, arriving, found the host immersed in watching an episode of "Gunsmoke," from which he could not tear himself away until it was completed. Coming apologetically into the living room when his program was finished, like a kid coming late to the dinner table, he shook his head in explanatory wonder and justification, and said, "I can't get over it; they have a completely new story every week! I don't know how they do it!"

About that time, television ownership came into my life. As I recall, it was on behalf of my children, who needed this means of sharing equally in the society of their friends. For the most part, I didn't watch the set at that time, soaking up the songs of the Mouseketeers by

The producer (left) and the writer comment on the putting-together of a prizewinning television documentary.

osmosis, laughing at the repeated antics of Kukla, Fran and Ollie at the dinner table and—remembering the personal horror of The Three Stooges from my early movie days—standing aghast at the influence they were now having on my children.

There were, of course, times when my immunity broke down, when life in the total society became too much of a burden for my book-oriented being and I would retreat—having been failed by my deity—to the haven of the bankrupt and dispossessed, and sit drugged for hours in front of the plugged-in miracle in my own living room, watching the seemingly endless trivia of an effluent society. In those days, when my weakness was upon me, I would without apology, with self-hate perhaps, suck in the emanations from this electronic citizenship machine and marvel at how when countless generations of man's spirit-

ual communication with God had failed, we could now sit easily reversing the process, and hear the voice of our own God in our own living room, consoling us, directing us, and keeping far from our own individual shore the horrors of pestilence, war and famine.

Such were the schemata of my relationship to the tube. I had very little to do with it, except to shrink or drown in horror. I was an artist . . . a writer . . . had watched friends sell themselves into the power of this destructive medium. I had watched as revered performers of comedic material virtually destroyed their ability to be comic by trying to keep pace with this leveler that could turn great talent into mulch within a thirteen week season.

But it finally came to pass that the question was called in my life, and I could no longer be the true-artist bystander, critic with everyone to criticize except myself.

I had spent fifteen or more years in a fruitless business endeavor. While my body had been kept together, my soul was scraped bare by the abrasive world of commerce and I'd had as much as I could take without spontaneously bursting into flame. My fear of such fire had grown so strong that I let go and fell into the water, aware of the possibility of drowning, but fearing it less than the flame.

In plain words, I released my infirm hold on the world of business and became a free lance writer. This at age forty-one, with a home, a wife, three children and a large dog. I had plays and novels running through my head while bills for orthodonture, real estate taxes, clothing, and home-repair ran through my hands. I found this balanced weight self-cancelling and, unable to do much about either, I was more than willing to accept television as my personal saviour. (An old New Yorker cartoon came to my mind. It was of a shaggy, long-haired lad storming into a stylish Madison Avenue advertising agency and inquiring of the receptionist, "Who do I see to sell out?" or something very close to that.)

I had a very old friend who is an independent television producer and an admirer of my work, most of which he had read. He felt I could, and should, be working in television and film. He knew that NBC locally was working up a documentary, that its producer was a highly knowledgeable man, and that he hadn't yet hired a writer for the show. He told me I could learn more about TV from this man than anybody else in town that he could think of. I was eager, so he phoned him to be sure that the situation hadn't changed, and suggested to the producer that he interview me as a possible writer.

The producer—one Scott Craig, who is co-author of these articles—agreed to see me, and we arranged an appointment.

(Continued on page 34)

JOSEPH SANDER free-lances in Chicago. Besides his film and television work, he writes fiction which has appeared here, in PERSPECTIVE, FURIOSO, and CHICAGO. He is working on a new play.

I recall it as an eventful morning in my life. I loaded my attache case with two full-length plays, some published stories from long ago, an unpublished novel, several unpublished stories, some copies of a weekly newspaper column and off I went.

I'm sure hiring a writer for something creative (and therefore personal) is a difficult task. Scott Craig had (and has) an enviable reputation as a producer of documentary programs. He had a film in mind that was to honor the Illinois Sesquicentennial, but not be *about* the Sesquicentennial. He was thinking of something special and he wasn't anxious to divulge it in detail to a stranger.

I recall his asking casually if I liked poetry. Affirmative—I did, indeed! He then asked if the name Vachel Lindsay meant anything to me. I laughed. Vachel Lindsay had been a favorite poet of mine since adolescence, and I'd just the previous summer taken my son to Springfield on a motorcycle trip, where we'd spent a wonderful afternoon in the old Lindsay home. I'd been there on several occasions previously, and had wanted my son to see the place and, above all, to meet the marvelous woman who had known the poet and, now retired from teaching, was in charge of perpetuating his memory. I was, and am, a member of The Vachel Lindsay Society and showed my card of membership.

I don't really know, but I suspect that this affinity for Lindsay, who was to be a part of the planned program, was at least a partial factor in the decision to use me as writer for the show. That and the fact that the producer extravagantly admired one of my short stories. (It was, interestingly, one that only a half-dozen people have ever liked, and one that most who have read it have found four times too long and ten times too dull—but I hold it most dear among my own works.) In any case, his decision was made and I was hired. Terms were simple and a letter of agreement was signed by both parties. Then the work began.

In the beginning we (producer and writer) had many a discussion of approach, as well as ideas for subject matter. The basic concept was simple, really, which is what made it such a good one. In that year, everybody was climbing on the sesquicentennial bandwagon and filming what amounted to Fourth-of-July speeches about the state, paean after paean of praise—making one dull show after another. Craig's idea was to take three stories of our state history that were being kept alive by people because they loved what they were keeping alive and who couldn't care less that it was a sesquicentennial year. Their work had gone on before and would go on after.

We discussed approaches and means of tying the three stories together to make a unified hour. As the idea had been originally submitted as four stories, we examined a great many to see if there were any we should add, to be sure we had the best for our purpose, and that we had three that could be interestingly tied together.

We finally agreed on the number and selection of three. One dealt with poet Vachel Lindsay and his com-

plex life of being alternately a vagrant and a poet of international fame, with no more money attaching to one than the other, which was a factor in his suicide. One story had to do with the early history of Galena, a once prominent river port boom-town that has become merely a scenic relic, and the third had to do with the colony of Bishop Hill and the communal society which had formed it, initiating Swedish immigration to the middle-west.

Each of these stories was to be tied up with a current, existing person identified with helping to keep the history fresh and available. In the case of Lindsay, we settled easily on the dramatic elderly-but-spirited woman who functioned as volunteer curator of his family home; in Bishop Hill we found a young native who, as a state historian, is restoring the colony in the town in which he was born and raised.

In dealing with the subject of Galena, we found a problem which was resolved when we talked with Clint Youle, a former NBC weatherman, who was still widely remembered and who had grown up in Galena, once owned and edited its newspaper, still has farm property there, and hobbies in old Galena mining history. We settled on the story of the early mine discoveries, and wove the segment around Youle, knowing also that some good footage would come from the filming of "Gaily, Gaily," a Mirisch Brothers production, which was shooting in town at the same time our location schedule was to bring us there.

The station did some negotiating with the Mirisch company and permission was obtained to film them at work. We were thus enabled to pick-up some nice period shots of costumed extras crowding the town, and at the same time pick-up a reflective statement of the faded glory of Galena. We altered the narrative after seeing the footage that was obtained in that manner. It should be mentioned, too, that such a production scene could not have been written into our script as an idea, because the Hollywood budget for that one day's work was infinitely more than the total budget for our entire documentary.

Budget did not become at any time a major concern in the writing of the script, but it must always be borne in mind that some ideas cost more money to film than others, and any script must deal realistically with the subject of money in that regard.

As a writing problem, I did find great difficulties in condensing the basic historical story of each segment sufficiently to permit the story of the real, today individual with whom we were also dealing. It helped as a dramatic idea to have the double tale in each segment, but it gives the writer a very keen sense of elapsed minutes when dealing with six essential stories plus an enveloping framework within the span of an hour, less time-out for commercials.

Once the segments were laid out, there was an additional writer's problem of finding a binding mortar to hold them together. When we learned of a bit of virgin Illinois prairie that still existed, miraculously having

(Continued on page 36)

reviewed the great freedom-of-the-press story of Elijah Lovejoy. I drove to the Amish country at Arthur, the religious settlement at Zion, and the Spoon River country of Edgar Lee Masters near Havana and Lewistown.

Because I would eventually need to translate everything into pictures, it was necessary to view locations for a combination of visual appeal as well as historic value. Three stories slowly emerged from the mass of material. Galena, an early boom town east of the Mississippi, was one of them. The tales of the rich lead mines that once flourished in this region have long since been obscured by the image of Ulysses S. Grant, a relative latecomer to the community who arrived in the 1850's after the bonanza had passed. Twenty or thirty years prior to Grant's arrival, Galena's broad Fever River carried steamboats loaded with lead ore to New Orleans; then the boats churned back upstream carrying the trade goods that made Galena the marketplace of the northwest. Rather suddenly, the rich veins of ore ran out and, almost simultaneously, the Fever River silted shut. The town was quickly jilted by the fortune hunters, who moved on westward to California and the next bonanza. Remaining to this day, however, are the beautiful old homes marked by the architectural influences of St. Louis and New Orleans. The diggings of the old mines can still be found and the rolling countryside that surrounds the town is breathtaking. I was also fortunate enough to discover that a Hollywood motion picture company would soon invade Galena with plans to redecorate parts of the town to look like Racine, Wisconsin. It seemed to me that there was obvious irony in this situation, and I made plans to have my own crew on hand to film it.

The second story I chose was about Vachel Lindsay, the Springfield poet. I remembered reading a few of his things in a college choral speaking group and I could still recall the rhythms of "The Congo" and "General William Booth Enters into Heaven." I dug into Lindsay's life and found the story appealing. He has been virtually forgotten in Illinois, long overshadowed by the images of Sandburg and Masters. His home in Springfield is open to the public but is only slightly restored. The interior has an air of melancholia that I found irresistible and hoped to capture on film.

The third story came about quite by chance. A city-planner friend once told me of a town named Bishop Hill and on one of my trips across the state, while checking the map, I discovered that I was nearby. Bishop Hill turned out to be a fascinating farm community of about 200, far off the beaten track, in the west central portion of the state near Galesburg. In the 1840's and 50's it had flourished as an experiment in communal living—the same kind of thing that was happening at Zoar in Ohio, New Harmony in Indiana, and in a number of other frontier places. The Swedes who settled Bishop Hill broke the prairie, prospered, and sent glowing reports back to friends and relatives in the homeland. As a result, the settlers of Bishop Hill have been credited

as a major influence in drawing a huge wave of Swedish immigrants to the middle west. In the old church at Bishop Hill I was surprised to find one of the country's finest collections of primitive paintings, more than 90 of them. They were done by an elderly house painter, Olaf Kranz, who had been a member of the original colony.

I was so taken with the discovery of Bishop Hill that I decided to depart from my normal method of producing and to film that segment of the story quickly. Normally I try never to shoot a frame until a firm script has been written, but in this case I knew that the beauty of fall was rapidly approaching and I wanted to get it. I developed a detailed outline, gathered a good crew, and shot at Bishop Hill for a week in October of 1967.

At about this time Joseph Sander and I came to a meeting of the minds on such things as fee, treatment of the script, and what kind of further research help our staff could provide. There were two or three Chicago writers under consideration for the job but Sander's background in drama appealed to me and, because he had never written for films, his outlook was refreshing. I felt that I could provide him with the technical know-how if he could provide me with the same kind of feeling and thought represented in his short stories and plays. Together he and I toured the sites familiarizing ourselves with the stories, working out plot details, and collecting additional materials.

During the course of our travels we found a device that we felt would link the episodic structure of our film. Some 2,000 acres of virgin prairie had been discovered at Goose Lake in the north central part of Illinois. This prairie was in danger of being destroyed by industry; conservation groups were actively fighting to save this last piece of prairie in the "Prairie State." Goose Lake Prairie seemed to us the perfect symbol to link the past with the present Illinois. The prairie served as an excellent method of giving continuity to our quite diverse stories, and at the same time we were able to give the prairie the kind of publicity which eventually may have helped to save it from destruction.

Sander wrote and rewrote a script and I completed my film about the court system before shooting began on "Three From Illinois." My crew (four men—cameraman, assistant cameraman, sound technician, and electrician) and I filmed for 15 days during the summer of 1968. In each location we used a contemporary personality to help us advance the plot. For example, in Bishop Hill we had used a young man who had grown up in the village and now returned equipped with an M.A. in historic preservation, determined to restore his own home town. In Springfield our central figure was an elderly school teacher who had known Lindsay and now devoted her remaining years and the last of her dwindling savings to keeping the poet's memory alive and his home open. In Galena the narrative was carried by an investment banker who spent his boyhood years in the Galena Hills and now returns to his farm whenever he can to roam the countryside in a Model-A Ford looking for forgotten pieces of

(Continued on page 37)

escaped the plow, we got very excited and planned a trip out to see it, accompanied by the director of the Chicago Museum of Natural Science, who explained much of the prairie life and history to us. It seemed to leap out that this prairie would serve as a wonderful symbol of "the Prairie state" and bind our stories firmly. We were further delighted to observe the Dresden Nuclear power station looming in the distance, clearly visible from Goose Lake Prairie, which would dramatically cap the historical image by pointing toward the future Illinois from this last vestige of its past.

Once that had been found, a thematic approach was needed that would make the binder interesting and we agreed, after much discussion, that I would try to find enough anachronism in all our matter to make it interesting. So we opened with a close-up of a flower-decal on the back of a small car while the narrator said, "State flower, the violet;" then went to a jet plane taking off while the narrator said, "State bird, the cardinal," and so on until we were well into our subject with warmth, visual interest, and something to whet the viewer's quizzical appetite and keep him from saying, "Oh, another one of those documentaries."

As an absolute newcomer in the TV field, I found it fascinating to think of words as something that work *with* pictures to add interest, instead of trying to interest by making pictures all by themselves.

In the three sequences, I also had three separate writing experiences. The filming was complete at Bishop Hill when I came on the project, so I viewed the raw footage, out of sequence and ten times overabundant, making notes on the more interesting shots and possible sequentiality for a good story. I also read all the available research on Bishop Hill, and developed some notions of how the story could be brought together. The film was later edited to those ideas, as they emerged in the final script.

The sequence at Springfield, dealing with Vachel Lindsay, was written to be filmed, but we had great problems in coming to a final conclusion, and much of the best of it was really developed by the producer on the scene. The script was re-written to the new story increments, which helped the sequence greatly.

Galena was a different story. We had a great many ideas and a developed outline, but we were also aware that much would change when we shot the "Gaily, Gaily" cast and crew. It was not until this footage was in that the final script could be written for this segment.

Finally, not all the program was to be narrated, which meant reading transcripts of hours of recorded conversation with the three living subjects and selecting statements that were relevant to the film, as edited, so they could be used in the subject's own recorded voice over the film where appropriate.

I never got to Bishop Hill at all, was one day in Springfield doing research with the producer, and two days in Galena. When you are on the spot, many ideas

come. Thoughts clash and there are feelings of potential power that sometimes seem very strong. There is a sense of awareness that you are the one who will be selecting and intoning what is to be said about a city, about a man, about a colony. You want it to be *your* statement, and it is hard to work it back until it becomes the statement made by the subject matter itself. Unlike most forms of creative writing, the purpose seems not to filter observation through your own mesh and make a personal evaluative response to the life you have measured, but to see what is there in a characteristic manner, so that the result of the observation is not so much to measure as to characterize—to present not the insight, but the outlook.

Further, work for film (whether TV or other) is so fragmented by the nature of the processes that something has to lose. When visual competes with word in a visual medium, it is the word that loses. And you begin to realize as you proceed in the work that it should be so. TV simply is not a word medium. Words help, but the creation is in the visual concept and in the filming and editing toward that concept. Some of the very best effects in this film were created by editing and special effects of sound. But all were made possible by having good film and a good concept to work with.

It is exciting for a writer to watch a creative producer and a skilled editor create a beautiful scene out of ordinary footage, by lovingly applying knowledge of how to hold interest. After that, the words are made easy. Of course, right toward the end of the editing process, there is a special use for words. Everything has, finally, to be brought down to a firm time. In that process some valued words may have to go, and others may need to be added.

It was a kind of jolt the first time I was told we needed up to—but not more than—forty-five seconds of copy on a certain subject. I'd never written with that kind of time in mind before. It was difficult to adjust to, but once you understand what's involved, it becomes less difficult. You have to evolve techniques for dealing with your own temperament as well as the subject needs. So, I wrote many pages on that given subject in order to ease my problems with myself. Then I pared the essential information from the excess and found the words I wanted to package the information in. Then I read it aloud, using a tool of my new trade, a stopwatch. I could read it within the prescribed time, even imitating my own idea of a professional narrator's stentorian voice and snail's pace.

When the film was tentatively wrapped up, it was shown to one of the executives at the station. Until this point, I had no awareness of executive involvement whatsoever. I knew they existed, with legendary powers, but had no threatening sense of their presence.

The only negative result of that screening, so far as I could see, was that one of the lines I liked a lot was taken out. It was a line with some pointed meaning within what seemed to me obvious humor. The humor did not reach the target, apparently, but the point did and was excised. It was very minor, and while I was personally sorry to

lose it, the loss did not materially affect the film.

In all respects, looking back, the process of writing this documentary was confusing above all else. There are many active pieces and parts, all moving at once, of which the writer is only a small one. It is difficult to keep the entirety in mind, and fortunately that is the job of the producer, not the writer.

Gradually, however, as the pieces are brought together and you begin to see a film taking shape, it is quite exciting to have been a participant. It is pleasant to hear good things said about it by the editor, and by others who are working around where you are editing and, attracted by the words or the music, come in to see what's going on, and stay to say nice things. Writers, like parents, always like to hear nice things about their children.

It is a long wait from the time the writer's work finishes until the film is shown. I began working in January 1968 and saw the finished product in early March of 1969. My wife was with me at the screening and she cried; that, of course, made me very happy.

"Three From Illinois" was shown to the public in late March, and I found myself so apprehensive, even in the company of the few close friends who came to our house to see the program on a borrowed color set, that the only line I heard was the one that had been taken out. It

seemed to me that it should have stayed, and I actually "heard" it where it should have been. For the rest, I swear I have no memory, except to say that it seemed worthwhile to have put so much into something that was received so well by the audience and the critics.

The great values for me remain: that my skills as a writer were greatly added to in the process, that the show helped me enormously in my transition to free lance writer, and that the friendship of Scott Craig was of great personal value.

I am still not one of television's greatest fans, and I don't like much of the programming that I have seen. But I do know that, at least in some circumstances, the creation of programs is honest work, engaged in by people of good will and fine talents. While the challenge to the social order and structures was, to say the least, minimal in this film, it was nevertheless an honest job for everyone concerned and there are no residual regrets of any kind on my part as writer.

There is also a very happy feeling that I still sometimes drift off to sleep with—that the night this program was shown, it was seen by more than a million people in the Chicago area. It was nice to be a writer again. Nice to reach an audience. I wish Fred Allen could have seen it.

(from page 35) **Craig**

history. He has discovered places like the Old Bucklead Mine, an abandoned shaft that dates back to French explorers of the 17th Century.

We concluded our filming in early September of 1968. Producers vary in the amount of footage they shoot. My own ratio tends to be about ten-to-one (ten feet exposed for each edited foot used) and in this case that amounted to some 10,000 feet. Editing began in late September and continued for eight weeks. During this period it was necessary to make a multitude of script revisions because the actual possibilities that occur on location can never be completely predicted. We then built our musical score and sound effects, mixed our tracks, and sent the film to Hollywood for printing.

At this time, for the first time, the program was presented to prospective clients. It is the policy of WMAQ-TV to absolutely complete a documentary before offering it for sale. The client is free to accept or reject the program, but he is not allowed to change it. Commonwealth Edison sponsored the program and "Three From Illinois" was aired at 9:00 in the evening on Sunday, March 23, 1969, some two years after I had received the initial assignment. It has since received a prime time rerun and additional prints have played at schools and gatherings

across the nation and in Europe.

Variety called it a "lyric memoir . . . marked by poetic and restrained writing." The *Chicago Daily News* said, "By far it is the best of the spate of TV tributes to the state's 150th anniversary." The film has gone on to win an award at the Atlanta International Film Festival and an Emmy from the Chicago Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. The cameraman, Jack Richards, who has since worked on motion pictures with Paul Newman, Steve McQueen, and Peter Ustinov, also won an Emmy.

People sometimes ask how I feel when I see one of my own documentaries on the air. I think there is a certain amount of frustration that any producer must sense as he watches a year or two of work gobbled up by television in something less than sixty minutes. There is also a feeling of anxiety because one is hopeful that audience reaction will be positive and that reviews will be favorable. In the case of "Three From Illinois", however, I remember being somewhat detached. Several months had passed since its completion and I was now deeply involved in a new project that seemed far more meaningful. I was in the midst of filming the story of a struggling neighborhood organization in the black community of Chicago's South Side—a far cry from the prairie at Goose Lake, from the primitive paintings of Bishop Hill, or the structure of the court system of Cook County.

SNAP

The photographs now covered one livingroom wall. Another wall would have to be used for the next series of shots.

Every day Willis scanned the photos—various views of areas in which tragedies had occurred. Among his favorites: the Duggan murder shots, his first project more than two years ago.

He had completely forgotten the case. One dismal, rainy day, while skimming old newspapers at the library, he came upon the story. That he had forgotten something this horrible troubled him a great deal. He left the library, returned to work, but found it difficult not to think of the crime. The little girl had been playing in an old, deserted three-story house when attacked by “the good, quiet family man . . . who never bothered a soul.” He threw her down three flights of stairs so she wouldn’t talk. Two young men passing by heard the girl’s last screams, ran into the house, found the body, tackled the murderer and cut him to pieces with new switchblades they had been itching to use.

The story stayed with Willis. He hoped it would touch him eventually. Shock, fear, disgust, pity—any of these would be fine. But he remained cold. No matter how many times he re-created the violence in his mind, concentrating on small details to bring home the horror—the child’s skull cracking as it hit the rotten wooden floor, the murderer being repeatedly stabbed with two knives—the incident remained distant, affecting him little more than when he had first read of it.

The next day he returned to the library. Perhaps studying the photos running with the story would produce the desired response. Unfortunately, his trip was a waste of time. The original photos, those the newspaper kept for its files, were probably sharp in detail, but the reproductions were awful. The plates hadn’t taken properly to the paper. Areas were either light gray or pure white. They were fuzzy as well. The photos looked like charcoal drawings that had been accidentally dropped into water and then left out in the sun to dry. The whole drama was out of focus: the two bodies, murderer and victim, covered with blankets; the sick young men being brought into custody; the sobbing relatives; the interiors and exteriors of the old house. Everything lost because of cheap printing, cheap quality paper.

He hadn’t made much use of his camera. No children or wife to shoot. No steady girl. He had given “creative” photography a try, shooting what fascinated him most—empty parks and beaches and streets—but eventually, the fascination wore off. Capturing an empty place wasn’t any more refreshing than capturing a crowded one.

Now the camera would come in handy. He hoped that the old house hadn’t been torn down. He would shoot the scene of the old crime from as many different angles as possible. The photos would be vivid this time, have a real feeling for “place.”

Beyond the high wooden fence, made up of boards haphazardly nailed together, he could see the second and third floor windows of the old house. Boards criss-crossed the windows to form fat X’s. He snapped a picture. He tested a few of the fence boards and came to a loose one, which he was easily able to knock down.

Weeds hid the ground. They were very long, rising far above his ankles. He snapped another picture. As he walked to the front porch, he feared he would step on a huge cockroach or rat resting somewhere along the way. He kept snapping.

Surprisingly enough, the doorway was clear. The inside of the house was dark, except for light running along the cracks between the window boards. Pieces of fallen plaster snapped under his shoes. He connected the flash attachment, inserted a bulb and started shooting the staircase. The split-second lightning flashes revealed cracked, rotten wood. The little girl had walked up these steps, perhaps hoping to find treasure on the floor above. She must have been an unusual child. Most children wouldn’t go near an old, deserted house alone. She was probably a lonely child who entertained herself by wandering and pretending. He sprawled out over the steps and aimed his camera up. The picture would be the staircase as seen from a child’s point of view, the stairs appearing very large, very steep, difficult to climb.

He scanned the photos on the wall and traveled the house again. Each series presented a different point of view. He moved from one series to another. Now he was the little girl cautiously climbing the stairs, looking all the way down from the first floor landing, looking at the comforting light coming from the clear entrance-way far below, entering the large, dark, empty room, searching the room for treasure. Now he was the quiet family man slowly climbing the stairs, turning around just to make certain no one was following, entering the small, dark room. Now he was the terrified little girl staring at the

RONALD DE FEO writes for WOR radio in New York City. His fiction has appeared in the MASSACHUSETTS, TRANSATLANTIC, and ROANOKE reviews.

high ceiling, partially illuminated by light coming from a large space between the window boards, suddenly falling over the banister, the ground floor coming closer, closer, then pitch black. Now he was the two boys running to the house, running into the high weeds, running up the staircase, passing the first floor, the second. Now he was the quiet family man as the room spun, as the black floor came closer, closer, as the darkness lingered.

Motion pictures would have been easier to view. Instead of having to imagine the action—the climbing, the running, the falling—by moving from one still to the next, he would have been able to see it all happen before him. But motion picture viewing wasn't very "creative." The film did everything for you. Not much real effort or involvement was necessary. Besides, motion pictures were too conventional. Everybody was making movies.

The Duggan murder case hadn't touched him. With these stills, he somehow "cared" more. The scenes were empty, but he gave them life. Each action was carefully built-up. At times, the suspense was unbearable and he would rapidly jump from photo to photo to speed the action to its conclusion. The boys ran faster into the house. The girl fell faster to the floor. The quiet family man died faster.

He was able to experience what they had experienced. He feared, he murdered, he died.

Tragedies had been fine. The Duggan Murder Case had been very stimulating. And so had been the Marquette Hotel Fire. And the Carlisle Alley Beating. And the Mad Sniper Killings. And the Warren Elevator Bombing. And the Clean-o-matic Laundromat Rapings. And the Duncan Hit and Run. And the Martin Family Twin-Engine Airplane Crash. And the Andrews Bridge Suicide. And the Schwartz-Valdez Head-on Collision.

They reminded him not to feel so secure. Just because he worked in a spotless modern office with show tunes coming over an elaborate speaker system, just because he lived on a tree-lined block in a quiet neighborhood, didn't mean he couldn't be next. Which role would he take? The crazed killer. The sex fiend. The dope fiend. The alcoholic. The manic depressive. The unfortunate victim. The victim in critical condition. The victim dead on arrival. The instantaneously dead victim.

In scanning the photos, he had identified with every type. How easy it was to just jump from one role to another. He had never realized there were so many unexplored areas of his personality. He was unbelievably complex, remarkably adaptable. He had a special gift.

Despite his enthusiasm, the tragedies became banal. He had never intended such a thing to happen. The horrors were supposed to haunt him. Eventually, all four walls were to be covered with photos. Then he would use the walls of the other rooms. Years later, with photos covering every wall of every room, he wouldn't be able to escape.

He was sick of the violence. It gave him a headache. The threat of death was so commonplace now that he just didn't care. You die violently. So what? The quicker, the better. He failed to see the tragedy any more. Who

could really say that if the victim had lived, he wouldn't have died of cancer a few years later? Which was the better way to go? And what difference did it make if you died now or in another ten years? Wasn't it best to die without waiting, without wondering night after night when your turn would come?

The flying saucer sighting was just the change-of-pace story he needed. He had been fascinated by the original newspaper account. At the library, he found a recently published article which re-examined the sighting in detail. The witnesses, all reputable, had been in complete agreement: the time was about 6:15 in the evening; an unidentified flying object moved over Green Hills Park; it was an extremely large circular object with a greenish glow and two blinking red lights; it made no sound; when it finally flew away it moved at several hundred miles per hour; it was frightening; it was beautiful.

How refreshing, he thought. His other stories had been open and shut cases. All of them had been completely wrapped up a long time ago. But this incident, although eight months old, was just as alive today as it had been yesterday. No one could wrap it up. No one would ever know if those people had actually seen a spaceship from another planet or merely an atmospheric phenomenon. Perhaps we are being observed, he thought. They might be planning a full-scale invasion. That would explain the host of recent sightings. The beings weren't making any attempt to communicate. They were photographing possible landing sites for the big day. That had to be it! My God. He was trembling slightly, full of life.

The day was cold. He could see his breath in front of him. Luckily, there was no wind. It would have cut up his face. The land was flat and open. Except for trees huddled together on the surrounding hills, there was no shelter. A huge imitation-marble comfort station rested between two baseball fields. From a distance, it looked like a Southern mansion. The station was closed for the season.

He could imagine the immense lawn on a warm, bright Saturday afternoon, people sitting on blankets cluttered with food and drinks, thermos containers and glasses reflecting sunlight, kids playing ball, trying to fly kites in the dead air. He could see the crazy colors: a shocking red sports shirt, an orange and turquoise striped blanket, a blue kite with a large red circle at its center. The sounds reached him: screams, laughter, shouted names. He shot the imagined scene, taking so many pictures he used up four rolls of film. At home, he would develop thirty-two views of an empty lawn. On those views he would super-impose his people, color, objects, anything to make them complete and dramatic.

He walked and snapped to the official picnic area overlooking the lawn. Then he climbed and snapped up the stairs leading to a railroad bridge. It was from this bridge that the Harrison family had observed the U.F.O. The object rose out of the trees to his left. "Keen," was son Jimmy's reaction, "Just like in the movies." "It can't

be," Mr. Harrison said to himself, "This must be some kind of a joke." "I'm scared, Mommy," was daughter Ellen's only comment. "Let's get out of here, Larry!" Mrs. Harrison cried to her husband. The family dashed to the stairs.

He aimed his camera at the sky. He snapped. Perhaps the ship had been larger. He moved back, against the iron railing. He snapped again. He snapped the ship as it flew over the railroad tracks, heading directly for the lawn. Something bothered him. If the aliens were planning an invasion, why had they been so obvious? Why had they sent a ship to a public park in mid-summer? He didn't want to be wrong. He hoped the creatures were not friendly, were not attempting to communicate. No. They knew they couldn't be destroyed. They were so powerful they didn't care who saw them. Shouts came from the picnic area. Other people had seen the saucer. "Look! Up there!" "What is it?" "Holy Jesus." "My God, call the police!" Our weapons would have absolutely no effect on the spacecraft. Just look at the size of that thing! The bridge was shaking. A train rattled rapidly below, rushing into the distance. He went to the railing and watched the train until it disappeared. "Dammit," he said to himself. The disturbance had ruined his concentration.

He got back in the proper mood as he walked and snapped through the picnic area. Empty branches obscured the sky. The picnickers probably had to search between a great many leaves before catching a glimpse of the hovering spacecraft. Then suddenly an explosion of green light. The criss-crossing branches made him dizzy. They moved from the foreground to the background. Now they looked like veins in the sky. He kept snapping.

It was getting very dark and very cold. He had used about twenty rolls of film. There would be an awful lot of work at home. Yet he kept snapping. The day wasn't over. If he couldn't shoot the sky, he could still shoot some details he had missed. The flash bulbs beautifully illuminated the picnic tables.

Leaves crackled behind him. He stood still and waited. It was probably a squirrel. The leaves crackled again, louder this time. Probably a stray dog. He would remain still, just let the thing pass him by. The cold pinched his face and ears. In his shoulder bag, under rolls of film, there was the knife he carried for protection. It was a fishing knife, actually. One edge of the wide blade was straight, the other jagged. If the police ever picked him up, he could always give an excuse for carrying such a knife. He was a sportsman; the knife was useful in the great outdoors. Of course, when he wore the knife to work in a leather holder attached to his belt, he was taking a chance. Carrying a concealed weapon was a felony.

He started to unzip the bag, slowly, being very careful not to make a sudden move. It had to be an animal. Nobody in his right mind would be out here at this time. The park was black, freezing. He listened closely, but the thing wasn't moving. He didn't understand. An animal would have attacked him or else run off. It wouldn't

wait around.

No. The saucer had disappeared. There hadn't been any news of a return visit. Still, the park had been completely empty in the afternoon. Not a soul. Not even an attendant. Such a large park too. A funny feeling came over him. He was weak and helpless and knew that the time had come. He wasn't going to get out of this place today.

A being was watching. They had come back. They had taken over the park. He forgot about the knife. It wouldn't do any good. The alien probably had the power to disintegrate him. Perhaps it was standing behind one of the trees, deciding whether or not to take him on board ship.

He wasn't jumping to ridiculous conclusions. He knew that something very large was behind him. The park animals were small. A mugger wouldn't explore a dead park. He wondered where the saucer had landed.

The leaves crackled again. He would take a chance. He ran down the small hill, towards the curving path. The main highway was just beyond the lawn. He would have to run across the open lawn. But they could easily get him then. The creature was running after him. He tried to move faster, but it was difficult. He hadn't run in a long time.

The white comfort station seemed to glow in the dark. A crazy illusion. Rather beautiful.

He was on the lawn. In the distance, he could see headlights moving along the highway. They looked like an army of fireflies.

He was in the center of the lawn, puffing, almost choking, when a shot sounded and a small, hard object penetrated the right side of his back, going deep, cutting his insides. And then another near the base of his spine.

His face crushed the grass. He had two bullets in him. Ordinary bullets! Had the creatures only progressed this far! What about the ray gun?

MAN SHOT IN PARK BY SPACE BEING. MAN SHOT WHILE SHOOTING. Amateur photographer Arthur M. Willis (center) is lifted into stretcher after allegedly being gunned down by creature from a "flying saucer."

His legs were numb. He couldn't get enough air.

A man turned him over. "My God," the man said. "My God."

All he could see was a silhouette. Yet the man seemed to be quite ordinary. "Help me," Willis said to him as loud as he could. "Please get a doctor. You must have a doctor with you." His back was wet with blood.

The man dropped the gun. From a bag or something, hanging from his shoulder, he removed a large black object.

"Please."

The flash of light blinded him for several seconds. The man had just taken his picture.

"Please, please, please." He wasn't sure. Perhaps it was only the after-image. But when he turned his head away, and looked across at the hills, more lights flashed, as if other photographers were also recording his death.

LIZA'S LEAF TOWER

A STORY BY

GAIL GODWIN

With an ornamental twist of the steering wheel, Paul aligned his new Mercedes with the curb of a shady Hampstead street. He switched off the engine, sighed, and morosely contemplated the house on the hill.

"Look at it, will you," he said to his fiancée, "It's as though she'd gone to special trouble to make it look shabby. She's the same. Exactly the same. She goes queerer every year. It's bad enough for herself, but there's Daniel, the little boy. God knows what will happen to him."

Avidly Sylvia took in the house; she hadn't needed to be told to. She looked forward to this meeting with Paul's mad sister (of whom he talked far more than he realized) almost as much as she did her approaching wedding day. "It's a lovely house," she said, "It could use a little paint. The grass needs cutting."

"Ha," he said. They sat in the convertible, shaded by dense canopies of leaves, and looked up at Liza's derelict house where she lived with her illegitimate child and an indeterminate number of paying guests. According to Paul, several of his sister's previous transient boarders were more than likely candidates for the paternity of

Daniel, whose name meant, Paul told Sylvia, 'God is my judge.'

It was a three-story Edwardian house, like all the houses on the street, and once it had been very beautiful. The other houses, however, had recent coats of white paint and brightly-enameled doors with polished brass knockers. On one billiard-table lawn, a gardener with wicker basket routed out the alien weed. But Liza's lawn had gone wild, flagrant grass waved ankle-high and its green was blemished with dandelions. In one bare patch lay a child's construction of raw boards nailed together. Wanton vines clambered up the sides of her house and had completely covered several ground floor windows.

"It makes me sad every time I come," said Paul. "Why shouldn't it? We were everything to each other for so long, father an invalid, mother dead; we had virtually free rein. Do you know, Liza and I believed—"

(Anything was possible in our world, Sylvia knew he was going to say.)

"—Anything was possible in our world. The real world was nothing, a poor shadow, it had to conform to ours and we were king and queen. I never told you. Once we wrote to T. S. Eliot and invited him to tea."

"Did he come?"

"No. No, he didn't. Funny, now I think of it, that's the first instance I can recall where the outside world didn't conform. No, his secretary wrote back and said he was out of the country. But the letter didn't arrive in time, you see. Liza took all sorts of pains with that tea.

GAIL GODWIN is a former free-lance journalist both in America and Europe. Her first novel, THE PERFECTIONISTS, is due out next year from Harper & Row; she teaches in Iowa City.

Fall 1969

41

She was sure he was coming. While I, well, I wanted her to be right for her sake, but I was beginning to realize our fantasies were . . . well, becoming less childlike along with us, and more unhealthy. She cried for days afterward. Still won't read him, even now. She's never got *outside*, you see. Oh, I don't know. She's probably spying down on us. Shall we go up? I wouldn't expect tea or anything, if I were you."

Sylvia climbed the stone steps behind Paul, not daring to look up at the top floor window for fear of confronting a pair of wild staring eyes. She breathed in the moist summer smell of Hampstead, removed on its hill from the choky London contest. There was something tantalizing about Liza's derelict lawn, she was drawn to its natural chaos, the way it flaunted its savage jungle hair among its conventional neighbors. She smiled at the kneeling gardener pulling weeds in the next lawn. He looked at her curiously and ducked his head towards his wicker basket.

On the porch, Paul pressed the bell. He had gone dark and abstracted. He stared at the closed door as though he expected a terrible vision to materialize upon it. It seemed nobody was going to come. Sylvia stood on the rotting floor of the porch and listened to the rustling of many leaves and felt drawn into an atmosphere of fairy tale. There was no sound from inside the house. Sylvia, too, focused on the closed door as if a shape might form there. Paul said, "I expect the bell doesn't work, either," and knocked heavily on the door. The two of them stood there, shoulder to shoulder, like young initiates waiting to be admitted passage. A sound came, soft as mice. The wood heaved violently, once, twice. Liza stood, stunning, disheveled, on the threshold of her house, smiling strangely at them both.

Paul flushed and said, "Liza, old girl. Well." Brother and sister gazed at each other, removed from time and surroundings. Finally Paul remembered Sylvia. "Liza, darling, this is my—Sylvia, you know, I told you. Sylvia, my sister Liza. At last."

Ironically, Liza shook Sylvia's hand. Her handshake was brisk, short-fingered, like a man's. She raked a clump of thick dark hair from her forehead which was moist with perspiration. As if reciting a lesson, she asked in a startlingly young voice, "Won't you come up?"

"Thank you," said Sylvia, moved by the wistful voice. She and Paul stepped over a pile of unopened letters and followed Liza, who was barefooted, up a lovely curved staircase whose carpet had been removed.

"What lodgers do you have now?" Paul called cheerfully to his sister who had disappeared round the curve of the stairs.

A soft disembodied voice answered, "Only Mr. Rambesi, now. The Finnish brothers went home. To Finland." Sylvia thought she heard the girl chuckle.

"Mr. Rambesi is a huge black Nigerian who floats round the place in gold and purple robes. He has the best rooms in the house," Paul whispered to Sylvia.

"You were never a successful whisperer," came the little-girl voice, "And that is not so about the rooms. Our

top floor is best, Daniel calls it the leaf tower."

"Leaf tower," repeated Paul testily. Suddenly they finished with the stairs and stood on the verge of an enormous sun-speckled room which was the entire top floor. Bare wooden floorboards rushed towards a wide open window at the rear. It was unscreened and leaves from the branches of old, tall trees crowded inside.

"Oh God, how lovely," Sylvia exclaimed, responding to the startling first impression. Then she felt utterly foolish when she saw what a mess it was. A child's cot in one corner, scarcely any furniture at all, really. Bookcases, an outdoor picnic table with benches on either side. On the table were some dirty coffee mugs, a half-eaten bowl of soup and an assortment of child's drawings done all in red crayon. Underneath the picnic table was a potty and it was not empty. Sylvia turned away.

"It's interesting that you can see that," said Liza, looking at Sylvia intently. "Yes." Then she walked along beside her bookshelves, running short square fingers along the spines of books. She collapsed into the only chair, a sagging one, and raked her hair over her face. "*C'est l'ennui, Paul, l'oeil charge d'un pleur involuntaire*," she chanted, smiling at her brother through the hair. "Remember?"

"*Il reve d'echafauds en fumant son houka*," he returned at once, his voice full of feeling. "Liza, dear, it is good to see you."

"Does your fiancée love Baudelaire?" said Liza, turning to Sylvia. "Baudelaire is my companion and my priest," she said.

"Where's Daniel?" Paul asked. "I want to see him. I want Sylvia to meet him."

"In the back garden," said Liza. "He's singing his new song. I can hear him." They all stopped to listen to the still afternoon, rustling with leaf noises. Sylvia thought she heard, but was not sure, the bell-like voice of a child singing, "Jesus . . . fat and green . . ."

"Lately he's begun to make up these amazing songs. These crazy images with all kinds of resonances. Like the ones you used to make up. God, he's so like you," said Liza, suddenly flinging her hair from her face.

Paul crossed to the big window and leaned his palms over the edge. He said, "Isn't Daniel old enough to start to school? Isn't he five now?"

Sylvia saw Liza stiffen. She hunched forward in her chair like a frail bony bird waiting to be attacked. "I thought I might teach him myself, for a while. Here at home."

Paul whirled around and faced his sister. "Do you really think that's best?" he asked, and the darkness came up in his face. "I mean," slower, deliberate, "Don't you think every child needs companions outside his own family? I think he needs to know children, lots of children, Liza."

"We didn't know lots of children. We had only each other," she retorted, still hunched and afraid of him.

Sylvia wandered to Liza's bookshelves and tried to absorb herself in the titles. She was amazed to find she and Liza had many books in common and shared similar

tastes for the occult, the philosophical, the morose, and science-fiction. Now she recalled how Paul, on an early visit to her flat, had remarked, pleased, "So you have this, too!" She had thought he compared her books to his.

Paul was saying, "Don't cry, Liza, not now. Not to worry. It's several months away yet til schools open. We can decide something later. Did I tell you Sylvia and I will be married in the autumn? We're counting on you as a witness, aren't we?"

"Oh yes," put in Sylvia, "We want you so much. You will come, won't you?"

"I'm sorry," Liza replied quietly, drawing herself up straighter in her chair. "It's awfully kind of you both. But I won't be able to come. Didn't Paul tell you, Paul didn't you tell her I never went out? I don't even have any shoes, you know, lost the last pair some months ago. No, Daniel and I stay here. We order everything from town. Our food. Books. Daniel and I have everything delivered to us so we can stay here and not bother to go out." Then, looking vague, she dug into a pocket of her skirt which was too long and took out a piece of rice paper, a little penknife and a square resembling dark chocolate. Arranging her lap to accommodate these, she set about shaving the little brown square.

"Liza, why not see someone about this not-going-out thing?" said Paul. "I could take you in my car. I have a new car."

"That's nice," said Liza, "But I detest psychiatrists."

"They can sometimes be remarkably time-saving at helping one sort out little confusions," persisted Paul, "You know I—"

"What worked for you won't work for me," Liza said into her lap. "Besides, I'm not confused. Daniel and I have this house, enough money. I don't go out because I have everything I need in here." She swept the little pile of shavings into the rice paper and rolled it into a cigarette. "Why don't you go down to the garden and get your nephew? We'll have our tea. Daniel and I made a cake." She lit the cigarette which flamed at her first hungry drag. She blew out smoke with a deep sigh. "We've prepared a celebration. I told him we would have a party for his new person. That's you," she said to Sylvia, smiling softly.

"I'll go and get him," Paul said, leaving them. The girls listened to his quick descent on the bare stairs. Sylvia looked at Liza. Liza studied her cigarette. Her face was the same pale oval as her brother's, with a high forehead and large grey eyes; only, where his had been sharpened and planed by the contours of the world, the cheeks hollowed, the eyes shadowed, the mouth nicked on either side, hers had remained strangely unmarked, round, illusively young. Liza, Paul had told Sylvia, would be thirty next birthday, a year younger than himself.

"Liza, let me help you with the tea," she said.

"Thank you, we can manage, Daniel and I," the girl replied, rising dreamily from her chair. She fixed intently on Sylvia, then swayed and left the room abruptly, running lightly down to the floor below. Presently, there came the clatter of tea things and a clear lively song.

Once more Sylvia decried her lack of French. What did Liza sing?

She crossed the bare floor to the big window and looked down at the pair below. Paul knelt in the sunlight of a wild green garden and touched the shoulder of a rosy boy who wore only a pair of shorts. Their heads closed together, blue-black; ravens conspiring. Paul was speaking persuasively, the boy listening closely. Sylvia's fingers closed round a leaf which had been grazing her face. She rubbed her thumb pensively against its cool surface, wondering.

An airy movement from behind caused her to turn and there was Liza, close beside her, watching her with the ironic smile. She extended the cigarette, indicating she wished Sylvia to have a puff. Sylvia obliged, she wanted to please Liza, she knew what it was. She took another, then another, exhaled languorously. The girls exchanged mischievous looks. Liza seized her quickly by the shoulders and pressed cool wet lips against hers. Sylvia foundered, then loosened, on the verge of tears. Liza ran away, leaving her alone with the cigarette. Sylvia took one pull after another, letting the sweet odor invade her lungs and brain like grass growing wild.

Liza liza liza, where's our cake? The new person we're to have, where is she?

Here I am, Daniel, Sylvia said, I am she. Perfect child, damp black hair, like sister and brother, uncompromisingly black. Forehead: wide. Eyes: grey, behind which lives a secret poet. Here I am. Let me touch you.

Say hello to aunt Sylvia, the brother said.

Aunts crawl in the dirt, said the child.

Sylvia? Darling? Are you all right?

The cake, Liza said. The cake, here's the cake. Daniel and I decorated it.

I'm worried about her. (To Liza)

Want to turn on, too? Sylvia asks Paul.

I see, he says, looking worried.

The sisters exchange collusive nods. Just like him, the heavy master. Yes. Liza's hair is wild like a tree, alive with movement. Daniel slips his hand into Sylvia's. You'll be fine, he says reassuringly, squeezing her hand in his warm, damp child's one. Liza asks me to hold her hand sometime, to make her real. You're going to be with us now, aren't you? One of us? You can come up to the tower any time you want, can't you? You and Paul.

Real leaves, picked green from garden trees, are stuck round the white icing of the cake.

What a nice cake, Paul says to Daniel.

The leaves rattle and whir to the chorus of Liza's kitchen song.

Que fais-tu? De tout

Que vais-tu? Ne sais

So simple. Translation not necessary.

Liza the hostess slices the wedding cake.

Come to the leaf tower tomorrow, Daniel says, we can all play this game I know.

Sisters and brother eat, lick icing from their fingers. Sylvia suddenly giggles wildly.

Swaying, Liza at last rises from the picnic table, pads unevenly across the bare floorboards and collapses with a thunk of broken springs in her chair. She closes her eyes, smiles secretly and pulls her black hair over her face like a curtain.

Liza often goes to sleep after she has had her cigarette, says Daniel. Will anyone have more tea?

We must be going, says Paul, whose fingers tremble. We'll come back. Daniel, I want you to remember what I said about the school.

Daniel walks down with them, holding Sylvia's hand. Paul's unhappiness is smoky-grey, dense as the smog of downtown London on a dark winter's day. Dark, dark. Sad, oh sad.

I tried to build this aeroplane, says Daniel, big enough to fly away in. But I didn't have the proper boards. I made do with scraps, you see, and it didn't work. I need this certain size. Three inches wide, a quarter-inch thick, but no more. So the wood will bend. I haven't mentioned it to Liza because she doesn't want us to go out and I don't think they would have it at the market or the book store that send our things. It would make her feel bad.

Paul, if you think you should see any of those boards, maybe you would bring them when you and Sylvia come again. Three inches wide . . .

They are at the bottom stair. Paul kneels finally on the unopened letters: ' . . . awthor . . . ' they say, 'Miss Liza Ha . . . ' 'Eliza Hawthor . . . Miss Eliz . . . ' and crushes the child to his breast, muttering promises about three inch boards and going to school and a love greater than all other loves.

Paul always cries at the last, Daniel explains to Sylvia.

Then they go out in late lemon sunshine, the muffled door-slam an echo to the child's farewell, they walk through weeds grown taller by an hour, past a child's abandoned construction, the leaves whirring in the moving air.

*Que fais-tu? De tout
Que vais-tu? Ne sais*

That gardener's gone, she says, he's manicured his lawn.

Oh God, Paul says, frowning through his tears, Oh God. He brings from his jacket pocket the distinctive Mercedes keyring. Do you understand, he says, do you get an idea? From the fashionably-curtained open window of the next house comes the Baroque tinkle of Mozart and Sylvia, pressing the back of her hand softly to her open mouth, floats down the sweep of the soft afternoon.

PHILIP DACEY THE LOST

the names we call
to get them to come to us
are numbers made of
wood scraps
and the doorway they walk through
has fallen down years before
the air not recognizing them
backs off leaving them
in an empty space
they remember as home
they come wearing
what they no longer hope for
are thus invisible
to themselves
thinking they are bodiless
they walk through their lives
like a wall
one has a face in the shape
of a ring we can wear it
for bad luck

another has poisoned
his fingers they fall off
leaving his hand like a spade
digging in air a third
buries his head
the earth unable to breathe
coughs him out
one by one they gather here
each folding into the next
they are like water
lapping until
it gives up
and all the mouths on top
shut themselves
into a lid
the names we call
to say goodbye to them
have been wrung out
and hang
like an empty body on a line

Some Thoughts on Reading Frederick R. Benson's Writers in Arms

Leo J. Hertzfel:

*"... If you want to be a free spirit,
be a poet."*

—Hubert H. Humphrey
*"Now the career of a protest poet in
any form of society is at best pre-
carious"*

—Meyer Levin
*"... The book writers are not where
it's at."*

—James Simon Kunen

The other evening I attended a poetry reading at a small Midwestern university. Two young poets who haven't published very much and an older man who has published in a number of magazines read from their own works. Not many people attended the reading—not many, at least, in comparison with the crowds at hockey games in our town; perhaps sixty people came to listen, mostly professors and their wives.

The poems read were short, polished, clever; in nearly every case they were charged with a sense of irony and wit. They were really expert poems of their kind, finely made, compact, and incisive statements

about the inner workings of Life told with just enough humor to protect the poet in case anyone should accuse him of taking himself or his work too seriously.

There was a poem called "Tilt" in which the poet skillfully drew a parallel between pinball play and toilet training techniques. There was a poem called "After Tearing Down a Whorehouse to Make a High School Parking Lot a Few Beds are Still Heaped on the Curb"—this poem, I think, suggested that everyone is a prostitute or else a patron of prostitutes. There was a poem called "Academics" in which the poet complained that he had never achieved a real back-slapping relationship with his college teachers. There was a poem called "Two Lovers" about the coldness of the sheets as the lovers' love cools. And there were several earnest poems about the inevitability of death, though the earnest tone was tempered by a kind of verbal smirk; death is pretty bad, all right, they said, but we can't take it too seriously.

They were all very fine poems and

the audience enjoyed the reading very much and clapped and laughed out loud from time to time. The toilet training poem was especially well received. But do not misunderstand me, the poems were occasionally naughty but they were never vulgar or disturbing. The poets genuinely delighted their audience with cool ironies and perceptions of the little follies and the small, pathetic terrors in lives around us and in us, and after the readings were all finished one old professor in the audience hurried to the stage and began slapping the author of "Academics" heartily on the back.

One could listen to those poems and then leave and go to a party where someone would say, "It's really something, you know, to have three such clever fellows around, right here in our town. Do you remember the poem called "At a Motorboat Race With Mary Sommers in Louisville, Ky."? It was good enough to be in *The New Yorker*. Malcolm Cowley says that there is more good solid writing being done in the United States today than ever

before. Or maybe it's Norman Podhoretz who says that; anyway I agree."

And one would then drink a bit with friends, warm after the shared cultural experience, and go home to sleep peacefully, in the flat Midwestern night, a bit more conscious of the ironies timeless in human existence. And then the next morning the usual meetings and classes and coffee at 10 with colleagues and a quiet discussion of MACE. Nothing was changed by the poems. They did not inspire one to *do* anything; indeed the very idea of doing anything was subtly derided in nearly every one—even dying came through a bore.

Sitting there the other night, listening to the readings, about the time "An Old Woman Having Tea Alone While Dusting Her Bone China Collection" was being read, I began to wonder what various people would do if they were here; Norman Mailer, for example—what do you suppose he would do at a reading like this one? Or how about Leroy Jones? that is, if the Authorities haven't locked him up again. Or how about Jack Conroy—Jack Conroy, author of *The Disinherited* and the man who made the famous speech to the American Writers Congress in 1935, and is reported to have said,

To me a strike bulletin or an impassioned leaflet are of more moment than 300 prettily and falsely written pages about the private woes of a gigolo or the biological woes of a society dame about as useful to the society as the buck brush which infests Missouri cow pastures and takes all the sustenance out of the soil.

Or perhaps Conroy didn't say just that. I asked him about these much-quoted words a year or so ago, and he—now old, retired to Moberly, Missouri, writing his autobiography, now a careful man proud of his books for children (*The Fast Sooner Hound*), imitating W. C. Fields, looking a bit like W. C. Fields, all political extremism carefully dissolved in a kind of protective humor, playfully passing out fundamentalist religious tracts that he considers

ridiculous—*Modern Woman's Dress Is Leading Men to Hell!* and *The Tavern Across the Way*—his idea of a joke I guess; is the joke the absurdity of believing words ever really change anything? Anyway, he said the quotation was misleading, inexact. He would clear it all up with the autobiography.

Nevertheless, I got to thinking about Jack Conroy and all of those other writers of the 1930's who believed that a writer must involve himself in the political and social activity of his times, become engaged, those writers who believed passionately that the literary art is not a dalliance in the precious psyches of the effete, not an agonized encounter with Form, that sullen bitch of the past. The 1930's was a fine time for such attitudes. There was the Great Depression and the Spanish Civil War and the threat of fascism at home and abroad. Things were in turmoil. Men were dying—of bullets in Spain, sometimes of bullets at home; children died of starvation in places like Alabama and Kentucky. For writers like Conroy, literature was an instrument of change; the writer was caught up in the struggles around him and the writer took a side. He was in a hurry and there was much to do. Theodore Dreiser went to Harlan, Kentucky (Bloody Harlan County), to investigate the coal miners' problems. He set up offices in the main local hotel and in the name of The National Committee for the Defense of Political Prisoners began interrogating citizens. *Harlan Miners Speak* is the Committee's report, a book difficult to come by these days, a book much like *Algiers Motel Incident*, a bit like *Armies of the Night*, a curious literary-social document prefaced by Aunt Molly Jackson's "Kentucky Miners' Wives Ragged Hungry Blues"—a ballad some distance from "An Old Woman Having Tea Alone While Dusting Her Bone China Collection" in tone as well as time. You have to take your role as writer seriously to do a thing like Dreiser did in 1932, to say the things that Conroy said in 1935; they're the sorts of things Norman Mailer does now. No won-

der Time hates Mailer, eh? And Robert Bly has his Poets Against the War in Viet Nam.

In 1935 Clara Weatherwax's *Marching, Marching* won a prize. The book was naked propaganda (the worker against the boss), the sort of thing to fit Conroy's taste (if the Conroy quote is accurate, which I think it is). The novel ends with a burst of Promise:

It was during the big round of applause just after the amount of the collection was announced, that Granny heard a worker saying to his neighbor, with violent gestures: "They talk about radical foreign stuff! Say, Communism is Americanism! That's what! Americanism! Didn't we have a revolution to get founded? to get our American freedom of speech? to get ourselves a government for the people and by the people? And isn't the people the masses?" Then before she realized, the audience was rising, singing; and she rising, too, heard with amazement that they were singing a song she had come to think must be the Finnish national anthem since so many little Finnish boys whistled it. "ARISE YE PRISONERS OF STARVATION. . ."—the mighty sound pouring from these many throats. Now for the first time she realized what it was. For the first time she saw a forest of fists raised at the end of the workers' salute.

There were many such novels and poems written in the United States in the 1930's. Many (perhaps most) of them, like *Marching, Marching*, badly conceived, hurried things, poorly-executed works of art; many (perhaps most) of them, like *Marching, Marching*, containing political statements of a most questionable validity—but they had a certain spontaneous vigor, a kind of commitment to the struggle of the times that can still evoke respect if not agreement and approval. But they are certainly dated, period pieces, and their themes seem now as far away as the Wars of the Roses. Like Aunt Molly Jackson's ballad.

"It is very dangerous to write the truth in war and the truth is also very dangerous to come by," Hemingway told the Congress of American Writers in 1937. One of the dangers of writing anything in war (the truth, the half-truth, the lie) is the short duration of the issues at stake. If a writer takes a side, he commits himself to the times; times change. Questioned about the Spanish Civil War, T. S. Eliot is reported to have answered, "While I am naturally sympathetic, I still feel convinced that it is best that at least a few men of letters should remain isolated, and take no part in these collective activities." One cannot imagine *him* traveling to Harlan to interview miners, but on the other hand his poetry will almost certainly outlast that of Aunt Molly Jackson. "The form endures but the content wastes away," says the old Professor. Uh huh.

It was this sort of thing (without the quotations, of course) that I got to thinking about the other night at the poetry reading. The late 1960's look a good deal like the early 1930's, a fact that may explain the current interest in literature of the 1930's. Now the violence at home and the war abroad make the finely chiseled poem and the well-made novel about as relevant as a 1954 Pinky Lee video tape.

So sitting there the other night, listening to a clever young man reading "Awakening in a Strange Bed at an Unusual Hour" to a bunch of pleased professors, I considered playing Jack Conroy and standing up in the middle of the poem and yelling, "For Christ's sake, boy, cut the crap! What about the Ronald Reagan and the napalm?" There *is* something irritating when a poet wanders delicately about in fragile ironies while the world burns around him. But then, if I had jumped up and yelled something like that, the professors and their wives would have been disturbed, and the well-trained boy might have answered, very coolly, "While I am naturally sympathetic, I still feel convinced that it is best that at least a few men of letters should remain isolated, and take no

part in these collective activities." And what can you say to that? especially with all of the applause in the room after such a controlled and formal reply. A cry for the disciplined form will evoke much approval from old times these days. It comforts them to believe that New Criticism is still youthful. Which it isn't, of course.

* * *

The Fall-Winter 1968-1969 issue of *Tri-Quarterly* is devoted to Latin American writing and is 510 pages long and weighs one and three-quarters pounds.

* * *

"What is *a* about? If one were to take *a* seriously, one would have to say it is about the degradation of sex, the degradation of feeling, the degradation of values, and the super degradation of language; that in its arant pages can be heard the death knell of American literature, at least from *The Scarlet Letter* onward. . . ."

—Robert Mazzocco,
"a a a a a",
The New York Review,
April 24, 1969.

* * *

" . . . —and still Thick snored— and no matter how much she accepted she knew it now; something they couldn't show in films."

—John Hawkes, *The Lime Twig*

* * *

"I'll give you Hedda Gabler," yelled the heckler in the balcony, and, in a mincing voice, "The candle is on the table." That's Hedda Gabler. Now I'll give you me: Fuck Ibsen. Fuck all liberal intellectuals and their fucking discussion. . . !"

—Robert Brustein,
"Monkey Business"
The New York Review,
April 24, 1969.

* * *

INTERVIEWER

You mentioned Kerouac a moment ago. How do you feel about his work?

UPDIKE

Somebody like Kerouac who writes on teletype paper as rapidly as he can once slightly alarmed me. Now I can look upon this more kindly.

There may be some reason to question the whole idea of fineness and care in writing. Maybe something can get into sloppy writing that would elude careful writing. I'm not terribly careful myself, actually. I write fairly rapidly if I get going, and don't change much, and have never been one for making outlines or taking out whole paragraphs or agonizing much. If a thing goes, it goes for me, and if it doesn't go I eventually stop and get off.

—"The Art of Fiction XLIII
John Updike",
The Paris Review,
Winter, 1968.

* * *

"McLuhan, in turn, has been the savager of the literary intellectuals. He has made the most infuriating announcement of all: You are irrelevant. . . . He has challenged them to come to grips, as he has, with the objective, empirical techniques of exploration developed in the physical and social sciences in the past fifty years; if the literary intellectual continues to retreat from all this into the realm of values, says McLuhan, 'he's had it.'"

—Tom Wolfe,
"What if He is Right?"
The Pump House Gang.

* * *

"A scissors and paste job," says the thoughtful young man. "Gluing snips from a John Hawkes novel and a Tom Wolfe essay and *The Paris Review* and two from the same issue of *The New York Review*. That's a cheap way of getting attention. You can prove anything that way."

"Who cares? Who reads it?" says a friend.

* * *

A SHORT PLAY SUITABLE
FOR PRODUCTION BY A COL-
LEGE DRAMA CLASS IF THE
PROFESSOR IS PROGRESSIVE

[The scene is a middle class-intellectual living room in Wyoming. There are many book cases on the walls and the cases are filled with heavy volumes. Through a picture window at the back of the stage the audience can see rough hills, perhaps mountains, and from time to time

during the action of the play groups of people pass outside the window: cowboys in cowboy hats, a group of soldiers, girls in bright jerseys wearing beads. There is the remote sound of a transistor radio tuned to a rock-and-roll station when the girls pass. The music is "Gitarzan" and similar things. Bruce, a thick packet of papers in his hand, is sitting beside a coffee table covered with papers. He is perhaps 45 years old, wears glasses and has a distinctly academic manner. His thin wife Alice stands beside the picture window, an issue of PMLA in one hand and a highball glass in the other.]

BRUCE: (putting down the papers and a pencil) That's about all there is, I think. I've finished the bibliography.

ALICE: Oh, Bruce, you *are* brilliant.

BRUCE: Well, it is a thorough Richardson bibliography. If I can get all these books in the university library, we'll have just about the

best God Damned Samuel Richardson collection west of the Mississippi river.

ALICE: (Thoughtfully) I don't know how you do it, all of the things you do. I wish someone really appreciated the things you do.

BRUCE: I think I'll call old Leo and tell him it's finished. (Picks up telephone and dials. Waits for answer.) Leo? I've been working on this Richardson thing, you know, the bibliography. Have you got a minute? (Pauses briefly and listens.) I'd like to read the thing, get your reactions. Now listen to this . . .

[At this point, Bruce begins to read the names, authors, dates of publication and publishers of 940 books on Samuel Richardson. He reads slowly and without any interruptions, enunciating each entry distinctly and with genuine enthusiasm. During the reading of the titles Alice walks back and forth in front of the window con-

centrating on Bruce's words. From time to time, when Bruce pauses momentarily to change the sheet of paper in his hand, Alice says quietly so as not to disturb him, "Bruce, you *are* brilliant. . . . You *are*, Bruce, you are" With the reading of Richardson entry #931, the curtain begins to close.]

* * *

"I will even go so far as to say that contemporary ideas and philosophies of life are such that only the cinema can do justice to them. Maurice Nadeau wrote in an article in the newspaper *Combat*: 'If Descartes lived today, he would write novels.' With all due respect to Nadeau, a Descartes of today would already have shut himself up in his bedroom with a 16mm camera and some film, and would be writing his philosophy on film. . . ."

—Alexander Astruc, "The birth of a new avant-garde: La camera-stylo."

The Conspiracy to Undermine the Freaks

Bruce Niceswanger:

Although Jim Garrison has fallen into bad repute, *conspiracy* is on the upsurge in America—Yes? There's James Earl Ray. There's the bastion that was Chicago doing fancy arithmetic—radicals + flower kids + clergy + McCarthy supporters = plot proportions (how do you prove it? Multiply those disturbing-the-peace convictions). There's the Media systematically sectioning off student "unrest" so there's a conveniently thin slice of anti-American, professional "conspirators" to deal with.

I'll sympathize. For a few moments. Real problems do beget real threats, and it's almost absolutely necessary to give real threats definite shapes. It after all makes a threat easier to understand. I'll be the first to testify that the defenders of the *status quo* in this country have a real *threat* on their hands. Anyway, though I'm from the other side of the fence (being anti-defense, that is) I want to get in there cracking also and tell you people about the plot to

get the hippies.

Freaks—h e a d s—drop-outs—hippies—flower children: one thing I'm refusing to do is get bogged down with definitions. Just don't ask me. You name 'em, I'll go by *your* names. Let's just say that to the American man on the street you are a freak if you look and dress "strange." That is a procedural definition. The American man on the street—this is very important to understanding anything American—is the procedural definer of what a freak is.

You might think I am belittling the hippie by stripping him down to his appearance: all style and no content. Well, you're wrong there. That psychic red flash the man on the street sees before he pulls the freak into the alley and beats him is a bona fide danger signal, like this: Condition—strange, assessment—threat, response—"defense." You know, the policy of containment? Whaaack! Whak Whak Whak! And the freak with the boot thudding in his gut—Is his long hair and the quasi-Army clothes he bought cheap from the

local Salvation Army store *content* to the man in the street?

I assume you know hippies are being beaten up. If you don't, they are, systematically, in every city in America. I want to be honest—I've never had the experience—if you want to know the truth I'm nearly as clean as *Playboy's* hipper models—so I'm going to retell the non-spectacular experience—somehow just-right-for-the-occasion experience—of this kid—his name is Buzzer and he's (was then) eighteen years old—who told it to Dotson Rader (Rader's article was in *Evergreen's* #59 if you want to read more about it).

He's on the Common in Boston and three sailors walk over the hill and see him lying on the grass below them. The sailors walk down, stand over him, and one says, "You a girl there under that there hair, you got a pussy under there, little queer?" Buzzer's lying real quiet, and while they look down at him, keeping up the chatter, he gets up slowly and tries to walk away. One of the sailors

moves in front of him, pushes him down, and another kicks him in the back, and kicks him again. Buzzer rolls over, trying to protect himself, and still trying to act cool and be quiet, and one of them hits him in the stomach. He lets out a groan. One grips his head, another his hair, and pulls. While the two work him over, the third (tattoo: MOTHER) goes through his pockets—"the pansy ain't got no bread"—and starts to pull down his pants. Finally a bunch of Buzzer's friends see and come running over, yelling. Buzzer lies there hurting while the sailors begin to leave, very slowly. The last one spits at him.

Maybe a good way of describing the extent of the hippie beatings for you is that there is hardly a town with a population over ten thousand in the United States in which there hasn't been a collection taken up for medical care for a freak—impairment of an eye, a broken rib, replacement of a tooth—things like that. If you don't believe me, take a walk, stop at the first group of weirdos you see and rap—ask them yourself.

It's becoming a commonplace for groups of—what can I call them?—of vigilantes to track down—"track down," that's an expression they use—a freak and shave his head, thereby exerting their masculinity in the process of cutting off the symbol of the freak's masculinity, his hair. Hippies being hitch-hikers, many vigilantes now pull off the highway to pick up a thumbing freak only to turn off at the next intersection and set up barbershop down the country road a ways. It goes without saying that it's going to be rough, the freak is going to resist, and he's going to get bloodied.

A Canadian freak hitching through Iowa last year got shaved and did a rare thing. He took his four attackers to court. The judge fined them a few dollars each. After the trial one of the guilty party, assessing the enjoyment he received from the experience against the small amount of the fine, told the press it was well worth it.

Cops? A saying in the Movement goes: There's only one thing a cop

hates worse than a nigger, and that's a freak. (And take a walk down to the ghetto and ask them about police violence.)

But they get along one way or another, stealing and begging not excluded. They resist. In exceptional cases, a few may attack (harmlessly). My freak friend Greg (jet black shoulder-length hair, handlebar mustache, talented artist) rants about people with flat-tops and crewcuts, says they (the people) look like buildings. He walks up to these people on the street and says, "Hey! You've got a flat head!" It's funny. Relieves frustration—some—built up from two beatings and having to run many times and facing almost relentless animosity.

However, 1969 is more or less—less being the overt conspiracy above—the modern age—Yes? And to describe beatings of freaks is to only feast one's eyes on—how do they say it?—the tip of the iceberg? When you really get down to the ominous conspiracy—tell you what—let's go back to the original source of definitions. The American man on the street—this is important to understanding anything American—is the source of all profound utterances against the Movement in the United States. (He has the remarkable aptness for saying something without *couching* it.) And the man on the street's profoundest concerning the hippies is—*A good day's work would set these goddamned kids straight.*

Do you—maybe sometimes, maybe when you see a bunch of freaky characters, maybe though you don't say it, or maybe not in so many words, maybe at the core of your being like the American man on the street—*feel* that? If you do, you are perpetrating one of the vilest rationalizations in American life. You are a party to the conspiracy to undermine the freaks.

Actually, every *human* being needs the satisfaction derived from working at, on, with, or into something. Actually, most sensitive, *young* human beings experience a nether period—sometimes called "finding oneself"—during which they don't work (can't work), but which is man-

datory for approaching any meaningful work. (Now, you'll have to grant me that nether period, and you especially should, you know, given your Utterly Fantastic System.) Finally, every person who resists this society dreams of a new society, a society in which—to bring it down to the personal level—one can see on the faces of passersby on your urban street love, satisfaction, and confidence rather than hate, frustration, and anxiety. Simple when you say it. Now here's the word on the freaks: the freak, with other freaks, is attempting to construct and live in such a society—now. I'm telling you that beneath all the failure and distortion and confusion that's what he really wants and that's what he's trying to do. (The activist, on the other hand, is trying to change the Utterly Fantastic System, in its entirety, for tomorrow. Whatever he tells you, it's nearly impossible for him—I know, he's me—to *live* the new society the way the freak does.)

But I'm off the track. As for the impossibilities (manifestations of the Conspiracy) facing the freak, he just hasn't got a chance. You (may) say he won't work. I ask you, what's he to do? Go into Plastics? Plastics isn't work; Plastics is Smile-'em-to-Death Modernized. Go into Hand Labor? Why should he when the meaningfulness (including honor, respect, etc.) of Work '69 is defined by the color of the collar? The freak knows; he went to school. Go into Semi-Hand Labor? The factories? Why, when with proper training he could design an automated machine to replace himself?

What I'm trying to say is the freak would go wild if the System permitted him the opportunity of investing—"investing," that's an expression they use—his soul in a meaningful work medium. Why, even *you* would!

Go into some "socially-satisfying" vocation? Why the minute the doctor-freak gives his services free he becomes a blade of grass in the great weed-patch of the System. (A choking procedure occurs here.) Doctor's skill is measured by doctor's income.

Compare, if you will, the laziness of the freak to the Systematized Man

of fifty who has *anxiously* worked for thirty years so he can look forward to laziness at fifty-one. Which is the inherently lazy one?

Well, the freak can go elsewhere if he doesn't like it. Yes, he's doing that. And there is where the ugliest part of the conspiracy raises its head.

Let's walk again, bring the camera, destination the hippie section of the city. If we're lucky we're going to find a group of freaks who exemplify the basis of the new society—love, satisfaction, and confidence. In other words, we don't want to find some freaks who reflect the anxiety of being surrounded by a hostile environment. We're looking for the oblivious ones.

Say we've found them. Take a look, check out the happiness. See the two working on the canvas. Which, by the way, is no work of art, is it? Well actually, he'd make a good plumber and she's a genius with numbers but they rap with us about how his old man can't get the message sonny boy can't get the hang of the firm which makes for real bad vibrations down home and even though he's a monkey with a wrench (why would ya like to take a look at the metal contraptions upstairs—what are they for?—why nothing) he ain't nothin' out there man, and she—your name?—Marie—and Marie's National Merit Scholarship royalty man—when, please?—oh, once upon a time—and she well take a look man ain't she beautiful (he smiles, she smiles) but you see that's a big hang-up out there do you understand—why?—she's just a pair of jugs that's what a hole a body a machine to them mind and body don't make it together out there right? So they've opted. And they say they're beautiful *here*, and what do you know they smile and everybody in the room smiles except a sad-looking weirdo in the corner who is *absorbed* in braiding something—wonder what he was going to be. And looking around the room we can't help noticing how *squalid* it is. Dream society ugh! They're so poor they're nearly filthy.

Meanwhile, out in the boondocks—that unproductive land *still* left over in 1969 after centuries of “sett-

ling”—country counterparts of Marie and friends are trying to make a go of it. You know, a new land of sorts, a great freak hope of a new community, maybe even a chance to technologize, a communal get-together upon new roots: a model, an illustration, for America. Until, that is, one, or two, or three freaks venture a half mile from the camp and fall into the hands of the vigilantes who have raided the commune, harassed its children, killed its livestock, surrounded and jeered, since the project's outset. Shades of reservations.—*Whatcha doin' out on the road, commie-fag?*—And technological bases: free trade with the surrounding communities whose newspapers editorialize about the dangerous element up on the hill, right?—Sources of energy, good townspeople?—You've got your sand and rock, weirdos. Eat it.—

My ears ring with “intelligent” condemnations of the hippie.—*The hippie has no solutions to the serious and complex problems of the technological age.*—I've heard that so often I have it memorized. The truth of the matter is that there are serious, complex *solutions* to the problems of the technological age and they are lying around in stacks on the desks of men who decided to do what the freak doesn't do—work for the System. The truth of the matter is there are degrees of importance of work in the System, and the really crucial work—de-militarizing, for instance—isn't being done and is not going to be done. And the really crucial work is no-freaks zone. *Get to work* translated means *Keep so busy you're too tired to give a damn about what affects your life.*—Can I have some time off to use my head, sir?—Get to work, kid.—The American man on the street, poor honest dupe of the powers that be that he is, tends to think that de-militarizing, for instance, is none of the freak's business. Well, the American freak is saying that working for a system that jeopardizes his life on one of its military battlefields is none of his business. Sad, isn't it, how true to themselves each of these American prototypes are.

Remember the nigger? The *lazy*

nigger? Remember the conspiracy against him—you know the pattern—slavery, then racism, then institutional racism? The nigger is lazy because the nigger has no initiative. The nigger has no initiative because he knows no matter how hard he sweats he's only going to make junior executive in Plastics. So the nigger says to hell with it. The nigger is lazy. Cute trick the System plays on the nigger, huh?

Now Buzzer—remember Buzzer? the freak who got worked over by the sailors—Buzzer isn't a nigger, but if he had a really fine mind—I don't know if he does or not—just saying he did, the forces at work in this society, the Utterly Fantastic System, wouldn't let Buzzer touch the serious problems of America with a ten-foot pole, much less work on them. Buzzer is a freak and Buzzer looks freaky and Buzzer may even have (horror of horrors) a freaky idea or two. And there's a conspiracy afoot to persecute him, call him lazy, and irresponsible.

And now we're approaching the end of my polemic. On the plot that has the hippie by the tail. You may remember in the beginning I expressed my sympathies for the conspiracy-needers. Now you know. We within/without the Movement are paranoid too. Very paranoid. The system is gonna call us unamerican and gonna put us in jail. It is. Weird feeling when you know you're veriamerican.

Maybe you think I've given the freaks more, or less, than they deserve. I tend to feel the latter. The freak is more than appearances. The point is, that's the important thing to America. Isn't that silly? And the whole business can be reduced to a question that sounds trite: Is the freak utterly fantastic because he won't change his appearance, or is the system utterly fantastic because it makes him? Isn't the level of that question thoroughly depressing?

Well, remember this. Behind every imagined conspiracy there is a real or imagined threat.

Find out for yourself.

Do both of you a favor. Take a freak to dinner.

How does a teacher begin to teach a course in black literature? By educating himself as thoroughly as he can, before he pretends to educate his students. The article which follows presents one such education—sufficiently detailed, the editors think, to be a veritable do-it-yourself kit for the times. John Lindberg teaches at Shippensburg State College, and will join the NAR in December as a contributing editor.

john lindberg

DISCOVERING BLACK LITERATURE

Courses in black history and black literature have become a liberal fad. But they are only a conditioned response to the stimulus of militant black curricular demands. They are easy and quick to add and once added they allow the school or college to evade a radical confrontation of black and white cultures in our society. Even complete black studies programs like those at Berkeley and some black colleges merely shift the object of traditional curricular designs that approach black materials with the same scientificist assumptions as have controlled studies in the dominant culture. Any attempt to develop indigenous disciplines like the new curriculum proposed at Federal City College has been clumsy and ill-conceived (as new ventures may well be) and has been dismissed as unscholarly extremism. True, black curricular demands match a black ethic rooted in a political growth towards black nationalist determinism. But equally true, white curricula match a contrary ethic of intellectual abstraction based on the habit of power.

So when I was asked to teach a black literature course I wanted to work free from traditional critical assumptions. I hoped by direct study to find a common cultural interest, rather than accept a split between subculture and dominant culture. But before I could begin I had to free myself of confusion from learned and unconscious attitudes. Now I shall tell how I did so and brought my class to recognize black contributions.

I

When I speak of freeing myself from confusion I mean the preparation I had to go through before I was ready to teach the course. First I had to decide to my own satisfaction whether or not there *is* such a thing as black literature. Conventional objections to a course in black literature arise from questions of race and content: skin-color should not be the criterion for including authors

in a course, the argument runs; and further, the scarcity of superior black writers leaves no subject to teach but cultural anthropology. I had to agree that skin-color as a criterion for inclusion would be a form of racism.

But I thought then, and have since been confirmed through teaching the course, that literature by black writers has an integrity that justifies a separate status. And this separatism is not a form of racism but is rather a matter of cultural identity. There is as much reason for teaching a course in black as in Anglo-Irish literature. The cultural motifs are the same. Both groups of authors write from their experience in a deprived condemned minority, both protest their exclusion, and both develop ethnic pride in exploring the imaginative potential of their group.

Without being racist, black writers exploit the topic of their own people and develop black archetypes within the broader literary tradition. These archetypes cut across traditional generic distinctions without blurring them. The teacher must look for the new archetypes and must teach beyond the usual genres or he may find black literature disappointing and ordinary. And the archetypes are distinct enough to merit a course of their own. Blacks use traditional genres as a way to their preoccupations; thus to put blacks in an American literature survey would be to mask them behind the traditional white themes and forms. As for the claim of few good black writers, the people who say so are just not well read—as I will show.

I had to decide on how to relate black literature to the broader tradition. It has become the literary fashion to teach by genres. But while there are plenty of good black writers, they are better at some forms than at others, and a course planned by genres would move unevenly. I decided that black literature would better show its relevance to the dominant culture if it were taught in a more old-fashioned way, dealing with backgrounds and sources, schools and influences.

So I had to learn about black literature from the way it happened as a folk-movement. And right away I saw the inappropriateness of the usual assumptions we make about literary history, as if the periods follow each other by Hegelian sensibility—the neo-classic revolt against Elizabethan excess, the romantic revolt against neo-classic restraint, and so on. Probably any literature takes its origins in less elegant ways. Certainly black literature does.

Black expression began in folk-sermon and folk-song during slavery, when most blacks could not read and write, and black literature has consistently tried to repudiate or to recapture its humble sources. The first work was fastidious about its ancestry and called for white values, modeling itself on white forms. But as they grew self-confident black writers began to adapt folk-materials, which have been the single most dominant influence on their work. These two attitudes correspond roughly to the '90s and the '20s and reflect the shift of the literary center from middle-class to proletarian writers. The next main movement after this Harlem school of "the new Negro" shows the major heirs of the proletarians perfecting a literary expertise based directly on black life but not dependent on its material for its appeal. Then came World War II, the legal victories of 1954 and 1964, and the upsurge of black power. Black writers have continued to use black experience as direct literary comment on American ideals, forcing their irony by updating the milieu: life for the black is much the same now as it was in Carl Van Vechten's bitter *Nigger Heaven*.

The greatest confusion of all concerned my personal qualifications to teach the course. Many people black and white thought the teacher should be black and made this assumption so casually that I lost confidence for a while. But finally I came to see their naivete. If a man's color were his main qualification to teach, this rule would be as racist as to use color for choosing authors to study.

More deeply confused was the plausible claim that a black can give more authentic interpretations because he knows black life from direct experience. This assumption is doubly naive: simply, because it assumes any black has had the same life as any other black; complexly and dangerously, because it assumes with an unintentional racist bias that black expression develops an imaginative dimension inaccessible to white sensibility. As a rule black teachers come from a higher social stratum than do black writers, or at least black writers have so steeped themselves in ghetto life as to be alien and embarrassing to many teachers of any color. (And if direct experience is the best preparation for teaching, then no one but a windjammer whaleman can speak deeply on *Moby Dick*. If *this* is true then literature cannot reconcile alien groups, and human values can have no more scope than the family, clan, or tribe: black and white must accept total alienation.) So I made the sensible assumption that black imagination unites the black world with common human values. This union is the only freedom blacks have known in America. If a white teacher cannot grasp this free dimension in black art as firmly as a black

teacher, then the freedom of us all is only a fantasy.

There was also confusion about my scholarly as well as my racial qualifications. My chairman assumed the teacher must have a Ph.D. and superior rank—not so much for qualification as for pacification of staff who feared the course might not meet the academic standards of other courses. I see no necessary connection between degree and teaching standards, and surely anyone with the commitment and literary sense ought to qualify.

But there I was with the usual scholarly credentials earned in a graduate school with no black courses. People teach other courses with the same irrelevant biased preparation all the time so neither did I let my schooling impede my education. Like any teacher landed with a surprise course I began to read primary and secondary sources to get as far ahead of my students as I could in the time I had before the course began. Like any teacher I would have to rely on my greater experience, wider reading, and expertise to bring the course alive in the students' minds. I would even feel the advantage of a shared fresh reaction as we worked through the assignments together.

Unquestionably, the broader and deeper the knowledge the easier and more masterly the teaching. But also steeping oneself seasons one away from an awareness of how strange and new the material is on first reading. So I chose my background books for their general interpretive value, not their deep scholarship.

To fill in on cultural and historical background I read two books on the psychological and social impact of slavery: Kenneth Stampp's *The Peculiar Institution* and Stanley Elkins's *Black Cargo*. Another valuable book on social and political materials is C. Vann Woodward's *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*; it sorts out the intertangled skeins of riots and civil rights legislation from Reconstruction to 1964 with attention to proletarian politics. Music as a record of acculturation is the theme of LeRoi Jones's *Blues People*. For the mutual influence of politics, economics, and literature I chose the massive *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* by Harold Cruse, an oppressive tome in bulk but brilliant in every part, a history of ideas with stimulating re-evaluations of writers.

I delayed reading any criticism until I was well into the course, for fear of prejudicing my reactions to the originals and thus biasing the classroom discussion. Robert A. Bone in *The Negro Novel in America* writes a book tending to the cult of aesthetic form and smacking strongly of a published Ph.D. dissertation, but he provides a fairly reliable run-down of literary schools and the most complete novel bibliography I know, apart from that of Abraham Chapman, *The Negro in American Literature* (Wisconsin Council of Teachers of English, Stevens Point).

Other books useful for depth and detail of black social and political life are Elliot Liebow's *Tally's Corner*, the summary essay in the Kerner report, Kenneth Clark's *Dark Ghetto*, and the autobiographies of W. E. B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes, Malcolm X, and Eldridge Cleaver. It is also useful to subscribe to *Negro Digest*, which is

more activist and prints more relevant literature than the somewhat bland publications of conventional black schools like *Phylon* and *College Language Association Journal*.

Specific preparation for immediate classroom use had to include just about all the work by the four great moderns: Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin. Students want to know about these men and will choose their works to write reviews and critiques about. The work of these greats alone would supply a whole course, even if we had no other significant black writers. But we do. John Oliver Killens, William Melvin Kelley, Ernest J. Gaines, Albert Murray, John A. Williams—these are only a few of the prose writers. Gwendolyn Brooks is a Pulitzer Prize-winning poet leading many fine black lyricists like Robert E. Hayden, Don Lee, Dudley Randall, and Melvin B. Tolson. In drama Ed Bullins and LeRoi Jones are preeminent among many new experimental playwrights. We have no need to study mediocre writers on the ground of their cultural significance—though this would be a valid ground for studying the marginal works of people like Jessie Fauset and Oscar Micheaux. Then the teacher should know about the famous literary feuds: Zora Neale Hurston and Langston Hughes, James Baldwin and Richard Wright, Killens's and Lorraine Hansberry's doctrinaire objections to Wright and Ellison. These are the sorts of things students ask questions about.

As for criticism, blacks have begun to write more and more of it about both black and white authors, but most of it uses extra-literary values drawn from the ethos of black power. Only Harold Cruse appears to have the objectivity and insight for truly analytic judgments. His chapters on *Freedom*, Wright, Paul Robeson, and Hansberry are enlightening. He is himself the most likely candidate for what he says black literature needs: a black Edmund Wilson or Kenneth Burke who can speak incisively of the curious conspiracy between the black middle class and America's early Communist Party to discourage black expression. But Cruse's talents lie more with social and economic criticism. Anyhow, especially with black literature, the teacher should begin with as few preconceptions as he can. He should work out his critical evaluations with his class and try to grasp the nature of each work as it is read, rather than try to rank authors in an absolute order in the manner of Robert Bone.

II

When I thought I was finally ready to study the authors, I found that I could not read just for me: I would have to consider my students' reactions while I presented mine. Another teacher of black literature wrote me that class interest would be my worst problem. He was right. Interest was high but misplaced. The most persistent problem in the course was anti-intellectualism. Most of the students had a humane or even radical concern for blacks and responded to the reading according to the sentiments expressed. As a rule this extra-literary

concern did not interfere because good literature grows from the humane concern of the writers, but often the class resisted an unfavorable literary judgment of a work whose theme they approved.

The problem of extra-literary concern was especially troublesome with the blacks in the course—ten out of the thirty students enrolled. They were all militant and at one time suggested a segregated course with a black teacher for them. They felt I made so much of literary structure because it was my white training, which they felt to be irrelevant to their experience and their reason for taking the course. I told them they verged on dismissing what they failed to understand as *not good because not black*.

Ironically, my course goal was to develop the archetypes characteristic of black literature. I always defined the critical terms I found myself using, and most of the blacks came to accept that they were learning more about themselves through applying such terms than they would have learned by ignoring the terms to look for black power propaganda. A main help in shaping their attitude was to stress the parallel of black literature with that of other minority cultures and to show that some critical terms are needed to deal with any culture's literature. They could see I was not using "white" terms against "black" writers. Besides, black writers themselves address a common American audience and deserve study by racially mixed groups using common intellectual tools. The most effective use of my approach was to show that the doctrinaire strictures of an exclusive black-power aesthetic limit an author in precisely the way Communist criticism limited Richard Wright and the Brotherhood misuses the hero of *Invisible Man*. They were also willing to accept that *Invisible Man* is better art than *Manchild in the Promised Land* because they could see that the one book is so rich as to need critical terms that the other could not fill, though both books are black protest.

Both black and white students had some common problems. The course was open to any level and could be taken for pass-fail as well as for a grade. The students ranged from freshmen to graduate students with all degrees of preparation. I could not rely on their reading background nor literary sophistication. Their naivete was a help when it let them react without preconceptions, but a hindrance when the readings invited comparison. Yet their very ignorance forced their attention to the works read and made them puzzle out the themes of the course for themselves.

I found these course themes in my preparatory reading. I knew I would need reference points for a class as mixed as mine was likely to be and for material that would need new treatment even for the blacks with their white-ruled schooling. I knew also that students keep little of the usual chronological survey course. So I was looking for themes that would stay with the students from use as reiterated interpretive schemes. Of course I found what I looked for, one may object; but I found what was *there*. If I had not found it, my course would have been harder to teach and would have deserved the initial

charges of using race or anthropology. But I *did* find the themes, and as I used them to direct my discussions they led me to archetypes for a distinct black literature.

III

Source, struggle, autobiography, selfhood, fantasy—these were my thematic labels for grouping the reading assignments. I do not pretend they exhaust the categories of black literature. Another teacher might find more. I do count at least this many in this order. I asked my students to challenge my labels and to suggest their own. We found some overlap but agreed in the main that the labels work for the material. Black writers use these imaginative categories to interpret the life of their people.

Source refers to the African heritage, slavery, folk-music, and Emancipation. Writers from different times return to these topics to allow a chronological study. The thematic unity among the topics greatly eases the student's job of remembering authors by name, date, and works written. *Struggle* topics come next in time and deal with the color line; this theme allows an instructive chronological contrast-study of shifting black attitudes toward the white world.

Autobiography includes all works written as fictive or actual poetry or prose family studies and first person recitals which, taken together, constitute an autobiography of a people. *Autobiography* is distinct from *Selfhood* because *Autobiography* delineates the painful tentative beginnings of learning what it is to be black as a person and as a member of a culture within a repressive society. The theme is subjective and tacit, emergent from the movement and pattern of the works. Most of its writers are moderns.

Selfhood is more self-aware and objective, dealing realistically with personality-types and life-styles, often satirical and with less emphasis on the color line and white influences. *Selfhood* writers are mainly contemporaries with sympathies for black nationalism.

Fantasy exploits the techniques of day-dream, wish-fulfillment, hero-worship, and free association of ideas. Works using *Fantasy* begin realistically and shift gradually into a world of arbitrary conventions where the dreamer can master his experience and make natural laws deliver him from his despair, but he often returns with abrupt disillusionment at the denouement of the work. Both *Selfhood* and *Fantasy* use a symbolic or real form of insurrection to change a world that forces fantasy as the only possible response left in the writer's task of finding meaning in his people's experience. *Fantasy* writers are mainly contemporary.

All of these themes appear in all conventional literary forms, though some are stronger in one form than in another. *Fantasy*, for example, makes especially strong use of the drama. The same author or even the same work may illustrate more than one theme, though one is usually dominant. Ellison has chosen *Autobiography* as the principal mode of *Invisible Man*, yet the book clearly uses *Fantasy* as I have described that theme.

After arriving at my categories and trying them out for a month in class I read Richard Wright's *Eight Men* with delight to find him state the same categories of black life that I had discovered. Certainly I do not compare myself with Wright. I am only grateful to have arrived at some of his wisdom. "The Man Who Went to Chicago" offers a more numinous interpretation than my abstract teaching-labels. But at least I have not misled my class.

My course themes are common enough, one may say—just what one would expect blacks to write about. But they mean more than literary topics. I spoke of literary archetypes transcending the conventional genres to form a distinct black literature. Whatever the particular genre, all works in a given theme repeat a particular pattern of imagery. In a separate article I could develop this theme more persuasively, but in my remaining space I can give a few examples.

Sources poems and stories recapitulate the history of black people for the purpose of recounting a proud heritage at a time before whites raped Africa, a bitter slavery not yet thrown off, and a determination to win a future as glorious as the past when white men are outstripped as the victims of their own greed. This pattern, of a shift in fortune between master peoples through time, recurs almost obsessively in black poetry. The most interesting feature of the pattern is its third unit, the prophecy of a glorious future that whites do not share—no hatred, no revenge, simply black fulfillment with no white interference. An obvious exemplar is Margaret Walker's "For My People." Others are Robert E. Hayden's "Middle Passage," "Runagate Runagate," and "Frederick Douglass," and Claude McKay's "The White City."

Struggle dealing with the color line has many exemplars, with all of them setting a tension between black and white as whites press in against blacks' living space and blacks insist on room of their own. The poem or story stresses the unresolved conflict in a symbol: the glass-shuttered door in McKay's "The White House," the white mountain and the beacon in Wright's "Bright and Morning Star." We can trace an increasing militance in moving from Paul Laurence Dunbar's "We Wear the Mask" to Langston Hughes's "Brass Spittoons" to Mari Evans's "Black jam for dr. negro." Contemporary versions of the motif dwell on images of black music and "black is beautiful," with Mr. Charley as an object of reproach or derision to show that segregation has driven blacks toward an indigenous power of survival. Yet perhaps the most eloquent expressions of the theme remain Countee Cullen's familiar "Yet Do I Marvel" and "Heritage" and McKay's "If We Must Die."

Autobiography's motif is mobility—geographical, social, and cultural—to suggest the inchoate stirrings toward self-realization away from the segregated slough of white-ruled ghetto existence, whether the ghetto be rural or urban. Usually the form is fiction and the story is tragic or satiric, because the striving black often mis-

takenly repudiates his origins and tries to live on the power of his private intelligence with inevitable betrayal by both black and white. This motif goes deep to fundamental human values with its oft-repeated yet always-forgotten wisdom that we grow only through sharing life with our fellow strivers. The most striking exemplar is *Invisible Man*, particularly because the hero still has no complete self-knowledge despite his repeated betrayals. Wright's *Black Boy* figures here too because it is a fictive reworking of "The Ethics of Living Jim Crow"; both show a man just surfacing from segregated ignorance through the discovery of language, but not yet sure how to use his freedom. Claude Brown's *Manchild in the Promised Land* also illustrates the motif with its curiously fatalistic sense of characters who survive they know not how. Of course all of Wright's *Uncle Tom's Children* is appropriate here, and James Baldwin's *Go Tell It On the Mountain* and *Notes of a Native Son*, and many stories like Paule Marshall's "Reena" and Martin J. Hamer's "Sarah." In all of these works the characters move from place to place and job to job to try to make a new life.

Selfhood is objective and explicit, while *Autobiography* is subjective and tacit. Yet the specific images marking the motif are harder to see. The *Selfhood* stories use images within their own limits to suggest a rebirth or recognition in the main character; here again we deal mainly with fiction. The image-clusters for mobility are clear in *Autobiography* precisely because that mode deals with limited points of view and the images are the author's guidepoints for the reader. The stories in *Selfhood* use characters who do know themselves thoroughly, so recurrent images are not as important for the meaning.

Under *Selfhood* come *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul On Ice* for their power to inspire blacks with enriched self-knowledge through sharing the explicit, articulate accounts of a conversion experience that transforms Malcolm's and Cleaver's lives with a vision of unity beyond racist life-styles. The heroes of this motif do not make the mistake of those in *Autobiography*; they find themselves through their love for their own kind. Here too lives the great folk-character created by Langston Hughes, Jesse B. Semple, who with his uninstructed na(t)ive intellect joins Falstaff, Vautrin, and Quixote for holding to his own truth in a mad world.

Fantasy too has no clearly recurrent image-cluster, though it makes its own distinct impression. Again we deal mainly with fiction, this time in two subtypes of harmful and helpful fantasy. In stories like Hughes's "On the Road" and Ellison's "King of the Bingo Game" the style remains realistic while the narrative moves by quick degrees into a world of wish-fulfillment which jolts back to an even more painful reality after the vain escapism—all with no change in style. But stories like Albert Murray's "Train Whistle Guitar" and William Melvin Kelley's "Cry For Me" maintain a world of innocence where style and narrative flow together in an unmistakably religious renewal. This helpful fantasy has not the brittle anti-climactic predictability of the harmful fantasy with its childish reverie of daydream. Rather,

the stories move out like myths from images of fertility gods and folk-saviors. The one type of story is analogous to Ambrose Bierce's "Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," the other to Eudora Welty's "The White Heron."

Contemporary black theater also uses fantasy as its main imaginative dimension. Its purpose is to create a socially acceptable symbol of black activism. LeRoi Jones and Ed Bullins best realize this explosive theme with artistic control. Their plays have more power than any others in American theater today.

Now it may well be that another reader will not find these thematic archetypes, or will find them only because I say they are there. And it is true that most black writers (as well as white) write for entertainment, protest, or didacticism. Indeed the didacticism of black power is the avowed purpose of the black arts movement, which is mainly dramatic just now, though a play like Bullins's "Clara's Ole Man" shatters us with its insight and control, not just with its honest picture of ghetto life. The works I mention, and others like them, have the weight and vision of art. So whether or not I have found new archetypes, these motifs with their quest for self-knowledge through repudiating revenge and seeking a folk-identity offer a more lasting version of black literature than any limited "aesthetic," "black" or "white," could do.

IV

I have given examples from the texts I used for the course: *Dark Symphony*, eds. James A. Emanuel and Theodore L. Gross (Free Press), *American Negro Poetry*, ed. Arna Bontemps, and *American Negro Short Stories*, ed. John Henrik Clarke (both Hill and Wang). Other suitable anthologies with less pretentious commentary than *Symphony* are Abraham Chapman's *Black Voices*, a compact but copious paperback, and Herbert Hill's *Soon, One Morning* (Knopf). Darwin Turner is editing a series of compact paperbacks of separate genres (Merrill). *Black Fire*, eds. LeRoi Jones and Larry Neal (Morrow), is a militant tome distinguished by much articulate writing on the black aesthetic and a wide, but I fear indiscriminate, selection of contemporary black poets, unique in printing several short street-theater type of plays from the black arts movement. Black theater is rare in anthologies as much of it is still in performance. Bobbs-Merrill will publish a few collections of plays by Ed Bullins and others during the summer. All of these books have useful bibliographies, especially *Dark Symphony*.

A few book stores have begun to specialize in black materials. Probably the first to serve this market is the Ellis Bookstore on Cottage Grove Avenue in Chicago. Mr. Ellis offers a complete range of materials from dream books to limited-edition scholarly works like *Deep Down in the Jungle*, prints by Charles White and other black artists, black greeting cards, recordings of Malcolm X, the tabloid *Mr. Muhammad Speaks*—a new world to most white and many black teachers. The Drum and Spear on Fourteenth Street serves Washington, D. C., and Chal-

allenge Book Center has just begun this year at 3803 Nicollet in Minneapolis. Mr. Clarence S. Carter, general manager for Challenge, will search rare and out-of-print titles (like the work of Carter G. Woodson), and specializes in bulk orders for the school and college market. These are the best known black book stores; some white-owned stores in New York have carried a black line since the black heyday of the '20s. A few films are available, but most of them present artificial situations with a strong didactic tone. The best film to use is the honest and tensely acted *Almost A Man*. Two or three films with a pedagogical program of black music are available from McGraw-Hill.

V

So I brought my class to view black writers as part of a

broad tradition. Through intensive discussion they came to a fuller understanding of what literature is, and they could not escape the knowledge that it is discovered painfully among unlikely materials. Together we discovered the powerful art of Richard Wright. He took over the class whenever we came to his work. Ralph Ellison forced them to accept his erudite skill in order to see his vision, and they awoke to the need for an intellectual tradition as well as a moral commitment. Writer after writer flexed into his characteristic vigor, starting up from mere names. For me the course was pure discovery; I felt like Columbus as the Antilles rose day by day over his horizon. I have won a chastened sense of the blacks' insurrectionary imagination and the hope that we may yet form a common tradition before repression and resistance inflame our senses past true perception.

PHILIP DOW

DO NOT PUNCTURE OR INCINERATE

"Don't touch me," say American Dream Girls,
making up prayers against my nosehair. Prime

Time sprays from tee vee renew their faith (&
maidenly) -full plastic heads. O, Virgins

Hermetically sealed, how can you pee?
My approach is too hard on, but I don't

Feel up to beating around bushes. Coarse,
I'm at fault. I can't get the hang of Not

Sweating. Or scouring my coffeepot breath.
And my armpits conspire to kiss themselves.

Astew in my juices, I'm dying chaste.
Drop-out behind the yesterday's menu

Of my mustache, become an urbane blight,
I lay in the bed of my own making.

Virtue from wet dreams: no peace of asking
those hors to commerce—Laissez faire chicks

Won't see me even in plain daylight. I've
grown invisible as spastics, trashmen,

Or just dogs on the street just plain screwing.

hugh fox: the living underground

Beginning some informal glimpses of America's less "popular" poets

Charles Bukowski

Charles Bukowski is the acknowledged King of the Underground. He's been published in such diverse places as *Kauri*, *Epos*, *The Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Evergreen Review* and *Poetry Northwest*. In 1966 he was elected "Outsider of the Year" by *Outsider* mag (then in New Orleans) and ever since then the underground has looked to him as a kind of spiritual leader.

My first contact with him was in 1966 when I came across a copy of *Crucifix in a Deathhand* in the Free Press Bookshop in L.A. I wrote to the publishers (Loujon Press, now in Tucson) and they gave me his address—Los Angeles. I dropped him a line, invited myself over and he responded—OK.

I had the idea of doing a critical study of Buk so I went over with my tape-recorder, scholarly and impractical, only to find out that he didn't open up that way, in front of a mike—and especially when there was a repair job going on in the street outside and his whole little apartment

was filled with the whams and bams of air hammers. And besides it was during the day, and as I found out later the Bukowski inner self doesn't operate when the sun's up.

So I came back, left the tape recorder at home and started talking to him man to man. He was born in 1920 and looks about twice his age. The whole lower part of his face is pock-marked from a serious case of acne he had years back, so serious, in fact, that they had to drill into the boils and squeeze out the pus. He works in the post office at night sorting mail, drinks everything that isn't nailed down, and is sagging, broken down, melting. You expect him to keel over—but he doesn't . . . won't!

The thing that most impresses me about him is the absolute clarity and control of his mind. Never misses a trick, knows where and who and why he is at any given moment, never gets disconnected or wanders . . . "drunk." He's always there, watching with his old lion eyes. Relax . . . but not too much.

When women are around he has to play Man. In a way it's the same kind of "pose" he plays at in his poetry—Bogart, Eric Von Stroheim. Whenever my wife Lucia would come with me to visit him he'd play the Man role, but one night when she couldn't come I got to Buk's place and found a whole different

kind of guy—easy to get along with, relaxed, accessible. No big "front."

The same kind of duality goes on in his poetry. I hate to say that the "real" Bukowski is a Bretonish surrealist, although there is a Bukowski who gets surrealist and writes about the day it rained at the L.A. country museum, about the Nor'-wester that "ripped the sheets like toe-nails," about an "Alkaseltzer Mass." The other Bukowski is all 300 pound whores (or any variety of whore), rundown bars, rundown apartments, beer, the D.T.'s, jail, slugging it out, screwing . . . this is the Great American Myth Bukowski, a latter-day Hemingway-Henry Miller-Mark Twain (the irreverent Mark Twain) all rolled up into one, and it's this Bukowski that the young poet studs have hooked on to. The other Bukowski, a little scholarly, a little erudite, very "playful" with reality, has been put in the closet.

One night I was over at Buk's house and Darrell (just Darrell, it's all the name he seems to need) of Glendale was over visiting. He was with a friend. Had just published

Buk's *Poems Written before Jumping Out of an Eighth Story Window*, one of the best collections of Buk's work ever put together in a single volume. Darrell was talking about "communication." He's an up-tight guy and was especially up-tight that night. He wanted to talk artsy-craftsy and Buk wouldn't buy it, kept saying, "I don't read you man, what the hell are you saying, why don't you say what you wanna say, man, say it for crissake, just say it" Only Darrell didn't get mad, took it, accepted it. The barroom Buddha was speaking, you had to accept. And that's the attitude of most of the younger poets—especially those of the "meat" school, guys like Steve Richmond and Doug Blazek (Blaz).

For my own part, though, it's the really hallucinatory Bukowski that I dig, the Bukowski that writes when he's gone beyond pose and is hanging to the reality roller-coaster for dear life. The worst kind of poses

are the "real" ones.

The last time I saw Bukowski was in June of 1968. I'd just copied out his fabulous bibliography on cards (he'd lent me all his magazine publications—in suitcases), and I was bringing the last suitcase back. He'd told me about his "old lady," someone he hadn't married, but had had a kid by, a kid he loved a lot. There were toys around his place. A sometimes-kid-presence was there. I knew he'd been bugged recently in the post office because he was writing his "Memoirs of a Dirty Old Man" for *Open City* . . . or at least that's what he told me the cause was. My wife and I had figured out that "the old lady" was putting the heat on and the "Memoirs" were just a pretext for the post office authorities to snoop into Buk's personal life. Anyhow, there she was, long almost-white hair braided, hanging down her back, wearing one-thonged Japanese sandals, kind of hatchet-faced, red,

oily-skinned, belligerent.

"I'm Hugh Fox," I said, putting down the suitcase of mags.

"Yeah, that's what I figured," she said and went into the next room.

My wife was with me, and wanted to stay, kind of invited herself, "We'll just stay a few minutes."

"Come on," I said.

Bukowski didn't say to stay. He looked a little embarrassed, like he didn't know exactly *what* to say. The Old Lady's Control Waves were coming out through the walls. He wasn't fooling anyone, was as meek as a castrated timber wolf.

Finally I gave Lucia a pinch. And she gave in.

"Take it easy," I said to Buk.

"You too," answered "umble" Bukowski, then added—referring to my critical study of his work, "Try Martin with the book. Don't fart around. He's a good man."

And that was it—we left.

(Next: George Hitchcock)

WILLIAM FORD

AT 4:47 IN THE AFTERNOON

The helicopter has given the word.

You must stop in the way of death. A driver
Has burned in the ritual of Monday's mass.

You feel the pits of your arms spreading deep
The smell in your coat and you long for that
First beer and the slow unstoning of limbs.

You think about the empty roads and towns,
About all that freedom they say the new
cars give.

The dials edge forward.
You rise in your sweat. The dusk is shaking
In the breath of a thousand iron lungs.
Slipped, you would enter a ring of sand.

ROGER MITCHELL

READING THE NEWS

New neighbors, this time closer.
One gives me the key by prearrangement,
but the door is unlocked.
Scrubbed cubes glow like bone.
Footsteps explode on the sidewalk.
Across the street
an old man clips his inch of grass,
weeds between cracks.
I sit on the floor against the wall
and wait to be moved in.

Boxes to stumble over
bearing other boxes
into blank-walled rooms,
bricks and boards in the corner.
I try to make it like the last
but the lidless windows
will not be put to sleep.
I write standing up.

* * *

Later, I walked
out of the patio
into the sluice
between two glass walls.
The grass was loose.
The sign read "Book Store"
so I went there.

Later yet, I came back,
empty-handed,
the baby hung up to smile
in the window.

* * *

We sat on the grass under a tree
watching the baby breathe,
not much more.
Even the car was there
cooling its bumper.

* * *

I read out of six books
at once. Split
books litter the corner.
Tomorrow, one dies
I would rather live.
The day after, I
deliver myself of a great burden.

* * *

"While I fogged the flowers, sweet smoke of delay."
It meant nothing, at the time.
Your mouth a dark brown purse
carried off the tram,
and I was ten years ahead, saying,
this is the last time I saw her.

* * *

In the whole country, three people,
one of them white,
know the treaties by heart,
which chief drank whose whiskey in '88,
which bank loaded the tribal council ten years ago,
write letters to Johnson,
wrote them to Woodrow Wilson.
The path goes a wide ways around them,
three old women snarling in the dark.
The young ones get down slowly from themselves,
a careful dismantling.
They are tired of that structure,
plug their ears with bottle caps. They
will get next year's letters.
Occupant,
Vacation at Lost Arrow Lake.

* * *

This morning
we wave goodbye to ourselves.

The moon watches the bullet
enter its brain.

* * *

At six,
the unset alarm clock
cracks.

I step out of the gray glacier
pleading with the man
across the street.

"I'm sorry
I made you read
Moby Dick."

* * *

(1st commercial)

You housewives of Kansas City
listen to me.
I have changed.
Now it is your turn.

We have had enough
of the Christian gunslinger.
Your pistols do not become you.
Put them aside.

You have nothing
that any man would die for,
except what you might give him
out of what is left of your bottomless hearts.

* * *

And old men sneak across streets
in their sleep
and pull up each others' weeds.

* * *

(2nd commercial)

I keep thinking of the life of gracious wisdom
like the death of Socrates in a cheap frame,
of life on a hillside in all weathers
among friends who understand the imperfections,
the sheeted good, sharing the well-draped truths.

* * *

Is that wampum there
at half mast?
Who's mourning,
and for what?

* * *

The lady of the flower-patterned pajamas,
of the too-black hair,
complains of a violated garbage can,
rattles the lid back into place.

Bending over,
reveals other patterns,
the shine,
the gritted seams.

Her voice rises
above the cracked cement
filling an accidental space among six houses
with a sound like sand.

* * *

They could not believe themselves cruel,

those who had worked hard
according to the customs of that place.
But just in case,
they found leaders who flattered them,
authorized beatings by innuendo,
wars by false evidence.
At night, they pulled armchairs
up to a blue stew
and counted bodies
as they fell into it.

* * *

I wake at night
to a distant pounding in the wall.
It is dark, listening.
I do not realize for a long time
that it is my voice
reading the news.
There are no words to the news,
only their shadows.
Like someone beating a dead throat
with a microphone.

* * *

A man is
what he throws away.
This indian
apparently
was himself.
Having nothing
left over
after the feast
of flesh and friendship,
he left us
these bones,
this land.

* * *

I am dreamfolded.
They take me over
a deep forest.

They give me an M-16, a compass,
a knapsack full of radioactive money.
Survive, they say,

as they shove me through the hatch.
Tell them you were captured.
We will acknowledge nothing.

If caught, kill yourself.
Something like sight blossoms over me
as I fall.

MOVED

Why didn't she scream? I could see her and what they were doing. The fluorescent street lamp shone on the black faces so that they weren't black but a terrible purple, and her face was green. And why didn't I scream? For the same reason she didn't, because it would bring one of those pointed black boots hard into the side of my head, or worse yet, into my groin or kidney. So I just lay there face down on the pavement trying to regain my strength and balance so that I could make another try, not because I was a hero—I didn't know her well enough for that 'die for you' routine, but because I had to do something, couldn't just lie there and watch, couldn't let the two goons drinking beer and laughing as they stood over me, couldn't let them beat me. So I would try again in a moment because if I could get to the other group fifty feet away, I might be able to shake her loose so that she could run, so she could at least get out of the parking lot into the street and start screaming.

I had had one date with Linda before she came up for a college weekend. We had gotten drunk together in

a bar. She, drunk, giddy, and happy because she hadn't ever been drunk enough to have scared herself. She had great big brown eyes. They weren't sad yet, but were going to be someday because she was free and careless and trusted too much. I had just met her so she was almost entirely without dimensions or limitations, a vital supple body, tall and graceful with a striking face dominated by the big slow-moving brown eyes that seemed to move smoothly instead of with the little jerks that most eyes move by. And lips, too, that drew attention, a mouth larger than usual and a powerful smile that uncovered bright teeth.

She was attractive only to certain people, not to me, but to people with a better sense of design—beautiful not to the photographer, but to the artist. So that was how she began in my vision—an unknown and undefined person but framed carefully with suppleness, careless enough to be delectable, free enough to get drunk on four vodka collins, graceful enough to become smoother, happier, more careless, more lucid, more feminine, and childlike as she drifted into the myopic, inchoate precision of drunkenness.

"I don't think I'm as smart as everyone around here," she said.

That was how she began her confession to me, her way of saying she was afraid, not just of school which

PETER OWENS is making his first appearance in the REVIEW, worked at Wesleyan University, and has lived for the past year in California.

Fall 1969

she was beginning, but of the large blob of things that school represented. It was nothing complicated, nothing that a little reassurance couldn't help for the moment. But like the sadness that hadn't come into her eyes yet, there was a futility hidden behind the voice as if she already knew that her brains had nothing whatever to do with being happy.

I felt good that night because she believed that I was more experienced than she, which I was, but more so because she had a kind of blind faith that experience had made me stronger to her and to myself, as if I could help her, as if she weren't alone. And because she didn't feel alone, neither did I, and that was a good feeling.

The whole night had a rhythm to it, moving from words to touch and then to laughter and silence. I told her about how starting school had been for me, and then we would stop and kiss for a moment, and then she told me a dirty joke, whispered it innocently, gigglingly in my ear because she didn't want anybody else to hear it, and she blew the punch line, and we shared our laughter not over the joke but over her missing the punch line. And then later out in the car we drank wine and made out some more, and although I didn't do much, I think she was ready to experiment, not out of curiosity so much as out of what seemed to be pure enjoyment and pleasure and carelessness. So the Linda I knew as I lay there hurting and bleeding on the pavement was a free spirit, free because I didn't know her well enough to know she wasn't. She was up against a storm fence with a look of amazed terror on her face, tears forming little sparkling springs down her cheeks. She held on to the fence with one hand and swatted uselessly and blindly with the other, swatting at the black, purple-faced bastards whose anger and frustration picked away roughly at her body and clothes. She was afraid to scream, afraid of the hard, brutal punches and kicks at her body, terrified beyond voice or action at the soft, guttural, angry incantations, "Gang-bang, baby. Come on, baby, white whore baby. It'll be the best you'll ever have." Her face was green, and all she could do was whimper. Her eyes were huge, and there was no hate, no fury, but only fear and desperation and a trembling lower lip.

I lay there tired and defeated, tasting the blood from my throbbing numbed nose that somehow got blasted so hard that I never knew what happened. Between the two pointed black boots that stood in front of my face, I could see Linda surrounded by a half circle of torturers. I remembered how it happened, how it started.

We'd been out walking because it was a warm, clear fall night, and we wanted to taste and smell the pure elation of it all. We'd been at one of the parties, and we still had our beers when we took a short cut through a parking lot about a quarter of a mile from school. And we got half-way through when I saw a car full of guys out drinking the sorrows of Saturday night, possibly made angry by the same air that had elated us.

"Linda," I said softly and shakily, "be ready to run like hell. Go for that street when I say go, and hand me your beer bottle."

"What's the matter?"

"Don't look now, but there's a car full of guys over there. That's us they're laughing about." And then the car pulled over towards us, and my heart started pounding, and I could feel my ears thumping, and I was scared to hell. We couldn't run while they were still driving. "Oh, Jesus." I whispered it. I had her hand, and I squeezed it stupidly and she squeezed back.

They stopped the car and quickly unloaded, and right then I figured we'd better start running, and if they didn't come after us then let them laugh or taunt at a distance.

"Give me the beer," I whispered, but she just grabbed my arm and stumbled along beside me. And then a beer bottle whizzed by our heads and shattered on the pavement fifty feet in front of us.

"Hey, white boy. Wheryall goin?"

"Go," I screamed, and I ripped her hand off my arm and pushed her, and after an initial stumble, she started running, and at that moment I felt another empty beer bottle hit me squarely on the back and bounce off and break on the pavement. She was fifty feet ahead when I turned and threw with all my might and missed and hit the car on the grill, and it smashed hard. One of them was thirty feet away coming at me faster than hell, and I cocked my arm and waited until he was almost on me when I threw for his face. The noise was horrible. The glass shattered on his forehead, but the sound was muffled and hollow and softer than when the bottle hit the grill. He went down and rolled holding his face, and I turned and ran, quickly gaining on Linda and hearing what seemed like hundreds of scraping and pounding feet close behind. When I caught her, there were still eighty yards to the street. I stayed behind her, running much too slowly for escape, feeling like I was having a nightmare, wanting to run faster, knowing that I had a good chance to beat them, but knowing I couldn't leave her alone.

They came closer very quickly, hundreds of pounding, scraping feet, and I looked back. Thirty yards to the street. Ten between us and them. Eight, seven . . . two guys led the pack, I could throw my body in front of them and trip them up like in a good football block. They wouldn't be too happy about the guy who got hit with the bottle . . . five, four, and then I cut to the side a little, one step, and then dove in front of their feet getting one beautifully, he sliding on his stomach up the pavement, but the other guy saw it coming and jumped high, and I caught his ankle with my hand but only managed to break his stride for a moment, and in a couple of seconds he came on Linda like she wasn't even moving, flew head first at the back of her knees so that her upper body flew backwards until the whip lash smashed her forward onto the pavement, and at the same moment she hit, I felt a thud of a body, two hands hard down on my shoulders and pulling me down backwards, and once down another dove onto me rolling me over and then another, harder, better aimed with an elbow catching me behind the neck and smashing my head down

into the pavement, scraping away the skin and knocking me senseless for the first time in a series of dizzy and painful blows.

They pulled us both up and pushed us, half punching or kicking, towards one of the darker corners of the lot. My head was spinning and my forehead stung badly, but I felt more of a sense of relief than anything else. The fear hadn't started working yet—I was too tired after the race to anticipate what must follow.

"Hey, mother-humpa, you're gonna be an awful sorry white sonofabitchin bastard for doin that." And then before I could even move or look, he slammed me in the stomach so hard that I thought I'd never breathe again, but I stood straight, and he grabbed me by the coat running beside me, dragging me, and then heaved me head first into the fence. And when I turned from my kneeling position, I saw the black boot coming piston hard for my nose, not coming too fast, but fast enough so I couldn't move a millimeter, but only watch, not time enough to even blink, but time enough to shiver once before I felt the thud, and heard the whining sound of my own ears and saw the white spots and blackness. And from some distance I felt my body lash back against the fence and then fell lazily forward back onto the pavement.

The relief came stronger in my tired haze, and I remembered back to my prep school days when I had been sitting in a desk cruelly taunting a kid I hated. People were standing around the large brightly-lit study hall waiting for the night study to begin. The kid stood beside my desk, and I kept rolling his tie under his chin and then letting it unroll itself, like one of those paper roller whistles little kids blow on for Hallowe'en or at a birthday party. And while he stood there I kept crapping on him, thinking I was just dandy putting a show on for the other kids.

"Don't touch that tie again or I'll hit you as hard as I can."

"Sure you will," I laughed sarcastically, and I rolled it up again and watched it fall. He started steaming, and clenched his fist, his small powerful fist that belonged to a small wiry arm. He repeated his oath, and I laughed again and reached for the tie, and then, blam! My body lifted itself out of the chair, or was lifted by the power of that punch, blam! He hit me again and again, and I was on my back draped over several anchored desks, like on a surgeon's table looking up semi-consciously at bright lights, blam! And then the body rolled over onto the floor, and guys grabbed and took the kid out who had been wild with hate and humiliation, and had knocked me senseless, and the only thing that saved my teeth were my braces which had curved themselves inward in a reverse arc, and my lips were so badly cut that it took half an hour to stop the bleeding.

That's what I was thinking about in my state of relief and haze, and then I heard them.

"Hey, white pussy, baby? You want to trade a little of that nice white meat you got hidden under that skirt for a little of this here black meat we got stored up here

in these trousers?" And they kept grabbing at her, poking, and hurting, fast and sharp. "Hey, baby white whore, you want Willy here? You want Willy *first*?" And he screamed 'first' so loudly that everybody jumped including Willy, and Linda gasped and jerked her hands up to her face, starting to scream and the guy doing the talking lunged forward with a fist to her stomach, so that all that came out was a lung full of wheezing squeaking air, a groan emptied and followed by gasps for breath.

"Hey, baby doll," he whispered from a deep cavity of hate, "don't scream, baby doll, white whore. Don't scream—just take ole Willy here and give him some goodies to pay him back for what Sir Galahad over there did to his face."

I lay there listening, waiting for a chance to grab that foot that was waiting ready to smash me in the head. I lay there regaining my senses, tasting the blood, almost enjoying the feeling of my narcotic numbness being replaced by anger and hatred. The city was quiet, and the air had gotten colder. On the other side of the fence was a house without any lights, but the back porch was lit partially by the street lamp, purplish white and paint chipping. And on the railing of the porch sat a skinny grey cat, motionless, blinking, quiet and probably purring. The throbs came quickly and seemed to shake my whole head, and as I began to see and hear more clearly, the throbs came more and more quickly, and I could taste gravel in my mouth and feel the warm ooze of blood on my cheek, and as the blood pumped harder and harder, I got ready to move, knowing I would have to wait for some kind of action with Linda to capture the attention of my two guards.

The guy doing the most talking was a big strong handsome black with chiseled features, a square forehead and jaw. Unlike the others, his jabs and pokes were more gentle, almost caressing, and several times Linda's swats hit his outstretched arm, but didn't move it, didn't even make his motions jerk. His profile was square like everything else, and I saw him put both hands on her shoulders and lift, while taking one foot and sweeping her two feet out from under her, and then lowering her to the ground, not even violently, just powerfully.

My two guards looked, and at that moment I pushed upward from the ground with my fist cocked back and lunged for the groin of one, feeling him crumble while at the same time feeling the pointed boot of the other catch me sharply in the ribs knocking my breath out, but he was off balance, and I gained a step on him charging for the group, charging with my head down seeing the big leader look up surprised and getting to his knees and me trying to head straight for him. But one of the lackeys knocked me off balance, ramming me into the fence, and when I bounced off, the big leader caught me in the mouth with his huge brick of a fist, and I heard the hum of my mind and ears, and felt from a distance another boot hit my ear, thud, and then nothing but the reeling sensation you feel when you get dizzy, and even though you may be on the ground, you

feel yourself thrust in a circular direction, but this time lost to the events here and just the clip clop, clip clop of a train traveling at night with bright lights and musty seats that were no longer velvet smooth but rough and stubbled. Clip clop going backwards, but feeling foolish because no one else was alarmed or thought we were going backwards, why this vertigo? from the dark window that looked back, was some guy looking back with a cigarette hanging out of his mouth going backwards.

And when the train stopped, I climbed out into the bright daylight, a little kid, with a gun in my father's barn playing cowboys and jumping on Ronnie and hitting him with my gun, hitting him and feeling his head jerk with my blows, feeling the elation of pounding his rubber nose with my fist, hitting, and pounding, hearing him scream, "No!" hearing him crying and pushing weakly, and me hitting him with my gun on the head, hating my best friend wanting to kill, and he screaming, "NO, No, no," feeling his warm blood—she screaming and smelling his rushing breath—smelling pine needles and—cold fall air—and then feeling the heavy stick go thud against our skull that was way outside away from me like somebody hitting a barrel that I was hiding in, feeling the body drift through the air, falling from the hayloft, hearing the wind and the groan from the throat when the body smashes onto the cement floor, and then stillness and quiet and cold.

I came back to my senses shivering and throbbing and aching all over. My face was pushed against the fence, and it was brighter outside. I lifted my head away and looked into the sky, still not knowing why or where or what happened. The sky was a dark grey, and the fluorescent light was hardly lighting anything. My neck was stiff, and one eye closed, but still nothing was clear in my memory. I could hear birds singing somewhere, but everything else was quiet and cold, and then it came to me, and I stiffly rolled over, my heart pounding with fear, my stomach half in my mouth, feeling panic, seeing the blood all over her exposed legs, and I reached for her, and she was warm and breathing and stirred, and I felt my own pain again.

I forced myself to my knees, and looked at her face. She was wide awake, and looked at me without a single sign of emotion. Just looked without blinking. Her head was bruised but not badly, just her forehead and cheekbone.

"Are you all right," I groaned stupidly.

She just lay there looking into my eyes, hers just as clear and brown and large as ever, not angry, not sad, but just colder and clearer.

"We'd better get you to the hospital."

She just lay there, staring. I put my hands on her shoulders, and she took one of her hands, and grabbed me firmly by the wrist. I didn't know what she was doing so I took my weight off that hand as I kneeled there, and she took that hand, that wrist, and flung it away, still staring coldly into my eyes.

"We'd better go," I said quietly, but she lay there

and stared.

It must have been half an hour before she moved or said anything.

"God!" she cried with a deep painful whine, "I could have fought harder. I could have screamed. I could have clawed his eyes out. It was only him—the big one— and after that they left. I let him do it, that's all—it hurt less that way. And he was gentle. Oh God! I moved." There were no tears—her eyes were clearer now than before. Her voice shook and squeaked, and beneath was a moan, "I moved, God! Goddamned." And she looked away through the fence at the cat which had come over and was rubbing its side back and forth against the heavy wire.

LAWRENCE SWAIM

DEATH IS ALWAYS WITH US

There were the different times in Kansas
of the storm wind
sucked at the earth
railroad
bottoms
there was the time of winter, the
grave of winter when
children left the steaming
kitchen to
go-to-the-barn and were found dead in
a glazing bank of
snow at noon
There was the tired and pleasant
time of early summer a noisy time and a
time
of sudden
quietness when the wheat turned its heads
against the wind (like
a glass ballet)
a long sheet of silence
against a slope of blue and
then you heard someone
calling your name

Madame Butterfly

Aunt Irma didn't like it. Not one bit when Uncle Fido married Ursula. Who is a stranger to the family and brought along a mangy white poodle named Pukie (which rhymes with you-know-what because of his delicate stomach) who is matted and looks like Aunt Ursula's dust mop which, Aunt Irma says, could stand a good washing, too.

Cousin Esther told me, "Momma is heartsick. Just heartsick. And has been ever since Uncle Fido got married. She says if he weren't her very own blood brother she would venture the opinion they aren't even married at *all* what with Ursula running around all day in a Japanese slit-open kimono with not a stitch underneath."

"And what did your father say to *that*," I wanted to know.

Esther rolled her eyes. "Poppa said she does too have a stitch underneath. She has on black satin pajamas and Momma said she meant underneath *them* and Poppa said so if she makes the world's handsomest man happy so let them be and keep our noses out of it and Momma said so Fido's my brother, my own little brother who I diapered when our mother died God rest her soul and what kind of a woman would I be not to care that he has never met a woman good enough to kiss his feet?"

"And what did your father say then," I wanted to know. Because Esther is funny and won't finish if you don't coax.

"So," Esther said, "Momma said again last night that usually she is too busy to mind her neighbors' business and if it weren't for the fact that they rent our upper and live overhead she would never even notice that Ursula runs around all day in a robe and she would never wonder why. And Poppa said, 'I'll tell you why. It's to keep nosey sister-in-laws from trying to find out if they have dirty shoulder straps.' And Momma said . . ."

Esther didn't get to finish because then Aunt Irma called us in for supper and she said yes I could stay all night again and why didn't I just bring my suitcase which is what she always says and Esther and I began to set the table.

So then Ursula came in. She knocked a little first and she said, "Hello, everybody. Hello, girls. I wonder, Irma, if I might borrow that pan of yours, please. The big one." And she pointed to Aunt Irma's brand new aluminum cookware roaster that she'd just got at the cookware supper where the demonstrators cook the meal and wash

up and the ladies invited buy the pans on order. Her voice was plump and warm.

Uncle Otis jumped up and knocked over his chair and you could hardly hear Aunt Irma mumble, "Neither a borrower nor a lender be." And Uncle Otis tucked in his shirt and ran a hand over his hair and got Aunt Irma's new roaster down from the pantry shelf and handed it to Ursula with a stiff bow and he said, "My pleasure. Won't you take a cup of coffee?"

Well, Ursula took the roaster and she said no, she had to be getting back. Fido (whose name is really Emil Fidelio) just got home from work and she didn't have supper started and she didn't know where the day went and Fido's feet hurt and she hoped he would be able to take her dancing anyhow and if he did would Esther and I come up and baby-sit with Pukie but we wouldn't have to do the dishes just keep him covered and we could watch television and eat peanuts.

Aunt Irma couldn't seem to take her eyes off Ursula's embroidered kimono and black satin pants and bare feet with toenails painted red to match the kimono. But she said, bringing out her old blue granite roaster which is chipped a little, "Are you sure you wouldn't prefer this one, dearie. It's smaller and not so heavy to handle and more convenient for a family of your size."

"Oh, my goodness, no," Ursula said and she laughed down deep in her throat. "My husband, as you may have noticed, is a big man—a *great* big man. This will be fine." And she set the big roaster on the cabinet while she brushed back her hair which is long and looks like rope unwinding on the ends and it straggles and gets into the corners of her mouth and sticks to her lipstick and her neck and shoulders look like sweet rising dough. And Uncle Fido, who was considered quite a catch and should be in the movies, can hardly keep his eyes off her even though she isn't exactly pretty.

Well, she thanked Aunt Irma and picked up the roaster and Uncle Otis held the door open for her and she left and when she was gone the room seemed empty. And chilly. And there was a smell of sweet talcum powder mixed with the cabbage bundles and apple pie we were having for supper.

Esther and I did up the dishes after, without Aunt Irma even noticing that we were banging the new sauce pots which usually brings out the worst in her.

Well, Uncle Otis sat down in his overstuffed chair on the porch and kicked off his shoes and turned on the light and unrolled the evening paper and Aunt Irma came out with a fresh dress on and her hair combed and she said,

"How's about us going for a little ride and getting

ALYCE INGRAM is a frequent contributor of fiction to these pages. She has recently held a fellowship from the McKnight Foundation and lives in Minneapolis.

the girls ice cream cones which they didn't have *a la mode* for their supper."

Uncle Otis put his shoes back on, tucked in his shirt again and said, when we got in the car, "So where to?"

"Oh, just drive," Aunt Irma said. "Anywheres. It's so nice. Maybe out Cascade way."

Uncle Otis said, "What's out Cascade way except dried up waterfalls and laundromats?"

Aunt Irma said, "So why'd you ask if you already know. Is it too much to ask that I should have some fresh air after a hot day in the kitchen?"

So we started out, Esther and me behind. And all of a sudden Aunt Irma sat up straight.

"Slow down at 173," she said. "Lily Gimlet stopped by this afternoon and she happened to say she asked Ursula where she lived before she met with Fido and Ursula said 173 Cascade. And I just wondered if maybe I could get a little information about Madame Butterfly who is ruining my darling brother's stomach starting the beef stew twenty-five minutes before he gets home from work and having it ready on time yet, still pink in the middle. And for that he takes her dancing."

Uncle Otis said, "Women." And he spit out the window.

Well, 173 was a big, old white colonial house with green shutters, a coachman lamp and lots of bushes. Aunt Irma said to stop the car, she would stretch her legs and go inside for the sake of her little brother whose happiness meant more to her than her very own.

Uncle Otis said, "Good luck, Sherlock Holmes."

Esther, who is such a tag-along, scrambled out to go with Aunt Irma but they came right back, almost. And when Esther crawled back in with me she held her hand to her mouth to keep from busting out laughing.

Aunt Irma's face was red.

Uncle Otis said, "No luck?"

Aunt Irma answered him, "Now look who's nosey."

Uncle Otis drove a few blocks without talking. Then he said, "Anybody home back there?"

Aunt Irma sounded glum. "A man," she said.

Esther buried her face in my shoulder and like to died.

Uncle Otis turned a corner. "Didn't know Ursula, maybe?"

Aunt Irma said, "Wouldn't talk."

"Not a word?" Uncle Otis wanted to know.

"Not a word," Aunt Irma said.

Uncle Otis said, "Serves you right." And he stopped the car for ice cream.

Esther broke up laughing and Aunt Irma turned around and slapped her but Esther couldn't stop and she could hardly eat her cone, she was shaking so hard.

Uncle Otis said, "So what's so funny, Giggle-Puss?"

And Esther whined, "Selma keeps tickling me, Poppa." And Uncle Otis said:

"Behave yourself, Selma. Or we'll take you back home." So I pinched Esther and sat on my side of the car and wouldn't talk and then she whispered that she couldn't tell me until later. So we drove back home and Uncle Fido called downstairs and said would we come

up and sit with Pukie, he and Ursula were going dancing.

So we did. And when we got there Uncle Fido was sitting in the kitchen drinking a bottle of beer and soaking his feet.

In Aunt Irma's roaster.

Right behind us was Aunt Irma. With a dish of cabbage bundles and a half of apple pie which she told Uncle Otis at supper the poor boy would never get a taste of married to Ursula who didn't know boil from broil.

Uncle Fido lifted his number twelves from the pan and yelled:

"Hey, where's a towel?"

Aunt Irma breathed as though she might be shorting out somewhere.

Well, Ursula came out of the bedroom (you could see the bed unmade) in a red silk dress and high heeled see-through plastic shoes and dangling earrings and she looked nice. But her hair wasn't fixed yet. It was still dangling.

And she said, "Fresh out. All in the wash." And she kneeled down on the floor in front of Fido and wiped his flippers with her hair.

Fido looked down at the top of her head with a funny expression like maybe he wanted to cry and Ursula stood up, then, and wound her rosey hair up in a sort of beehive and stuck a fancy pin through it and she looked pretty, now, but a little messy because of spots under her arms getting bigger.

Aunt Irma walked downstairs quietly. So quiet you couldn't hear and we went in to take care of Pukie who was in his basket under the table and we looked out the window as they left and Uncle Fido walked as though his feet didn't hurt a bit. And he helped Ursula into the car like she was an egg just laid.

So Esther and I did the dishes which were about three days of them with egg stuck because Aunt Irma yelled upstairs and told us to and Esther told me then why she had laughed so hard when they came back from the white house on Cascade.

She said the house was a funeral parlor and there was nobody inside but a man in his coffin who 'wouldn't talk' and Aunt Irma threatened to skin her alive if she ever told her father and we laughed and ate peanuts until Ursula and Fido got home. They both smelled like sweet wine and they had their arms around each other and there were stars in Ursula's eyes and in Fido's, too, and he gave us each a dollar and Pukie woke up, for the first time, and climbed all over them like anything and they didn't care.

Sometimes Aunt Irma doesn't behave the way you'd expect her to. For instance, she wasn't the least bit mad about the roaster. In fact, she told Ursula to keep it, she never used it anyhow and it just took up room on the shelf. And when Fido said they'd like to fly down to Mexico for a weekend but what would they do with Pukie, Aunt Irma said she'd be glad to keep him. And she did.

And Ursula even gave him a good bath, first. In Aunt Irma's roaster.

peter cooley

REACHING OUT, KEEPING POSITION:

New Poems by James Wright and Robert Lowell

A poet builds a reputation only to see it define, confine, him. Only by an artificial act of the mind can we pretend we're able to see either *Shall We Gather at the River* or *Notebook 1967-68* outside the continuing context each man is making for himself. This is context both as public figure (though Lowell has more of this, Wright's associations with Robert Bly give him one, too) and as "voice" of the poem. We read each of these books to find the new signature of the known poet's speaking; and the books are valuable to think about together because they emerge from, rebound against, and are probably limited by, the same conditions of living in the United States today.

Reading *Shall We Gather at the River* continues to extend the sensibility which Wright's previous book, *The Branch Will Not Break*, developed in us. What the terms of this sensibility were can be seen in Robert Bly's first book, *Silence in the Snowy Fields*, as well as poems he has printed in *The Fifties* and *The Sixties*. The individual poem of this "type" is structured around a series of statements and descriptions by which the speaker hunts for relationship with his inner life in small natural objects, searching for metamorphosis or reincarnation. The post-Symbolist hang-up over finding the right relation with the object that one finds in Stevens, for example, is missing; there is a new confidence in imagination that can melt into what it perceives in order to enlarge itself. This confidence, and the limited range of objects, makes the speaker's experience archetypal by implication, and the solitude with which he enters the poem is absorbed through the poem's process into a loss of the actual self in favor of a new state of being which may include that self or may transcend it. Consider these endings to poems in *The Branch Will Not Break*:

When I stand upright in the wind,
My bones turn to dark emeralds
(*"The Jewel"*)

The wheat leans back toward its own darkness,
And I lean toward mine.
(*"Beginning"*)

Suddenly I realize
That if I stepped out of my body I would break
Into blossom.

(*"A Blessing"*)

Shall We Gather at the River, by James Wright. Wesleyan. \$2.00

Notebook 1967-68, by Robert Lowell. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. \$6.00

The situations of poems in *The Branch* are not merely rhetorical, but, like those of Bly in *Silence in the Snowy Fields*, they are actualized dramatically by the speaker's involvement in the perceived scene. In *The Light Around the Body* Bly moves his poems toward a rhetorical structure of imagized statement, and the thrust is in the direction of political indictment of America combined with archetypal experience of "we's" and "they's" more than the personal "I." Sometimes the voice is a persona; many times it is unabashedly prophetic:

The mass sinking down
The light in children's faces fading at six or seven

The world will soon break up into small colonies of
the saved
(*"Those Being Eaten by America"*)

But Wright's new book retains the old Bly-Wright situational structure and more personal speaker while pushing toward a representation of the social-political-cultural environment that surrounds the speaker's immediate experience. And often this environment is not made integral to the poem's form as personal lyric meditation; it seems an accretion, an attitudinizing to make the poem "relevant." The police and Chicago appear more than a few times as touchstones of cruelty and brutality, a practice observable in many poems published in magazines since the Democratic Convention last August. I'm not arguing with Wright's views on any subject, only with his ability to convert them into poetry. Look at the ending of "In Terror of Hospital Bills" which is confusedly about economic and spiritual poverty, the relation between the two never really clarified in the poem. To end it Wright says:

I will learn to scent the police,
And sit or go blind, stay mute, be taken for dead
For your sake, oh my secret,
My life.

Or again, there is "The Minneapolis Poem," an attempt to do a Whitmanish thing in Wright's own way. But where is the social reality the poem discusses? It is not rendered in the poem but hangs around it, a vapory assumption, and the enduring human condition is screened here by the presentation of fragments of some actual present that the speaker never represents. The poem shows, finally, how un-Whitmanish the speaker really

is in his alienation from everyone. The ending seems the patronizing fantasy of the middle class man who wants to meet the poor as long as he can do it in a beautiful, visionary, way:

I want to be lifted up
By some great white bird unknown to the police,
And soar for a thousand miles and be carefully hidden
Modest and golden as one last corn grain,
Stored with the secrets of the wheat and the
mysterious lives
Of the unnamed poor.

What I'm saying, I guess, is that many of the poems in this volume create a new "intermediate reality"—not the personal-dream vision of *The Branch* nor Bly's social-archetypal one, but something in between that's mixed, unconvincing. See "Speak," "Before a Cashier's Window in a Department Store," and "The Poor Washed up by Chicago Winter" for more of this.

Even when the relationship between the speaker and the external world is as simple as the microcosm-macrocosm one in "Living by the Red River" I find it more believable than a poem like "The River Down Home." Are the Czechoslovakians here in the speaker's mind, in another reality beyond life, or actually living in some sense? Compare:

Blood flows in me, but what does it have to do
With the rain that is falling?
In me, scarlet-jacketed armies march into the rain
Across dark fields.
(*"Living by the Red River"*)

Oh Jesus Christ, the Czechoslovakians
Are drunk again, clambering
Down the sand-pitted walls
Of the grave.
(*"The River Down Home"*)

But so far I've been too hard. What is good in the voice of this book is a new, more spoken, less self-conscious idiom, dependent not on image but grammatical suspension. "Brush Fire," for example:

In this field
Where the small animals ran from a brush fire,
It is a voice
In burned weeds, saying
I love you.

The feeling of these next quotations is like *The Branch*, but note the new ease in maintaining a single key of emotion — one characteristic of Wright's style — without monotony, and a new confidence in speaking of the spiritual as personal and supra-personal.

We shall waken again
When the courteous face of the old horse David

Appears at our window,
To snuffle and cough gently.
He, too, believes we may long for
One more dream of slow canters across the prairie
Before we come home to our strange bodies
And rise from the dead.
(*"Poems to a Brown Cricket, 2"*)

To speak of the spirit at all in times like ours requires a peculiar and courageous vision that is genuine for Wright. The book is filled with poems in semi- or actual prayer form; the title itself seems a question, but without question mark is more a tentative affirmation and a command to live in the inner life, to go down into the river. James Wright's poems after *Saint Judas* have taken us into that life. Maybe in the near future he will find some more believable means to connect with external reality than these poems show.

Wright's speaker doesn't really see himself as sick in a sick time — just out of or in contact with a mystical presence immanent in natural objects part of a sick age. But in Robert Lowell's *Notebook 1967-68* the vision of the world we saw earlier in *Lord Weary's Castle* and *Life Studies* re-appears with a new resignation to what is, even while the main speaker is presented not only as sick and private but as public man writing of and working for public causes. The more impersonal, yet more visionary stance with its consequent formal ordering of *Lord Weary's Castle* and the autobiographical, Williams-influenced free verse of *Life Studies* are combined here. What comes out is a new reconciliation:

Man is the root of everything he builds;
no nature, except the human, loves New York—
the clerk won't prove Aseity's existence
by bussing from helpless cause to helpless cause
The rain falls down from heaven, though heaven keeps
her noble distance, Dancer, seen not heard.
(*"The Heavenly Rain"*)

We will each breath, and make our peace with war,
yearning to swoop with the swallow's brute joy,
indestructible as mercy—the round green weed
slipping free from the disappointment of the flower.
(*"Through the Night, 7"*)

Remember the ending of the last poem in *Lord Weary's Castle*?

What can the dove of Jesus give
You now but wisdom, exile? Stand and live,
The dove has brought an olive branch to eat.
(*"Where the Rainbow Ends"*)

The Catholic vision was thrown aside in *Life Studies*; for the "old lapsed R.C. lacking half-way to atheist" speaker in *Notebook* it hangs over his poems in particles. As one poem says of the secularization of this vision,

"in you, God knows, I've had the earthly life—we were kind of religious, we thought in images." And Christ, man's opening to God, is no more now than what we've made him, "our only king without a sword, turning the word forgiveness to a sword."

In his "Afterthought" Lowell says of *Notebook*:

... as my title intends, the poems in this book are written as one poem, jagged in pattern but not a conglomeration or sequence of related material. It is not a chronicle or almanac: many events turn up, many others of greater reality do not ... My plot rolls with the seasons. The separate poems and sections are opportunist and inspired by impulse. Accident threw up subjects, and the plot swallowed them—famished for human chances.

This statement, honest enough, explains part of my difficulty with this book. Read as a whole, it is impressive in the range of the speaker's involvement and association with contemporary life. ("Contemporary" is taken to mean not only *our* present but those Lowellian focal points of history which reflect our own times, especially Greece and Rome, Puritan New England, and Germany of World Wars I and II.) It certainly fleshes out the catalogue of dates from 1967-68 which is listed on the last pages, beginning and ending with "The Vietnam War." And it does so by the speaker seeing himself as part of, not superior to, or removed from, our times. Read straight through, as it seems to want to be read, the book is chilling in the accumulation and cross-references of its perceptions of our "civilization" of imperialism, alienation, and dehumanization.

A repeating fly, blueblack, thumbthick—so gross it seems apocalyptic in our house—

... It is like a plane
gunning potato bugs or Arabs on the screen—
one of the mighty ... one of the helpless ...
I kill it, and another instant's added
to the horrifying mortmain of
ephemera: keys, drift, sea-urchin shells
packratted off with joy, the dead fly swept
under the carpet, wrinkling to fulfillment.

("Harriet, 2")

But what troubles me about the book is first the form of the individual poem—blank verse fourteen-line stanzas—and the quality of the language in the poems as separate entities and as parts of a larger scheme. Too often there is the feeling of this potentially inorganic form being "filled up" to bring a poem off. Too often the meter is slack and flaccid as the poem hurries to another thought.

Before the final coming to rest, comes rest
of all transcendence in a mode of being, stopping
all becoming. I'm for and with myself in my otherness,
in the eternal return of earth's fairer children,

the lily, the rose, the sun on dusk and brick,
the loved, the lover, and their fear of life,
their unconquered flux, insensate oneness, their
painful "it was ..."

("Obit")

The individual poem here is thick in texture yet fast in pace: we're reminded again that Lowell's real forte is not image as measure but line. And it is not the line as breath unit of Williams and the Black Mountain poets, but the line as a rhetorical unit that can be twisted into speech. This was true even in *Life Studies*:

Nautilus Island's hermit
heiress still lives through winter in her Spartan
cottage;
her sheep still graze above the sea.
Her son's a bishop. Her farmer
is first selectman in our village;
she's in her dotage.

("Skunk Hour")

In *Notebook* the rhetoric is loosened within the given, outer form:

My photo: before I was I, or a book;
inch-worm! A cheekbone gumballs out my cheek;
too much live hair. My wife caught in that eye blazes,
an egg would boil in the tension of that hand;
the dragging shoestrings write my name in the dust ...
("The Literary Life, A Scrapbook")

But when the line isn't working as poetic rhetorical unit, one wonders sometimes if some of the materials in *Notebook* wouldn't be better in prose—I think especially of the set-pieces on writers Lowell knew. Remember how effective the middle section of prose was in *Life Studies*. Something like that would have worked here.

At times, too, the "notebook" form is imitated too directly, and references—even for those of us who have read and re-read Lowell's previous books—seem oblique or incomprehensible. The speaker suddenly puts his hands across his mouth or turns his head so we can't follow something except as private reporting or trivia. See "The Graduate," and "Mania, 1968." Some of this is to be assumed in the public figure writing for his audience; some of it results from the larger form of *Notebook*. And some of it is just plain indifference to art.

In his use of image Lowell is not really "surreal" as he says in his "Afterthought." Admittedly, trying to take critic or poet up on his use of the term is becoming more and more pedantic and futile: practically every contemporary poet is said to be "surreal" in some way. Lowell bends his image sometimes to accommodate his outer form, sometimes to discover itself despite that form. His use of detail compares interestingly with Wright's: with Lowell the natural and man-made objects in the present consciousness of the speaker are flooding into each other. Both are seen in small slices which are all

the speaker can bear: "Satyr and chick . . . two fraying dragonflies, clinging to a thistle, too clean to mate."

Lowell likes image appositives like that one which end in pronouncement. Also movements like this one from personal object and its own history to present event, myth, and then self seen as myth.

This typing paper pulped in Bucksport, Maine,
onion skin, only merchandised in Maine,
creased when I pulled the last sheet, and seemed
to scream,
as if Fortuna bled in the white wood,
first felt the bloody gash that brought my life.
("Five Dreams, Onion Skin")

Notebook is the kind of book every poet would like to write once— if only to reach out for a new way of

going while synthesizing where he's been. I can say, true to reviewer's cliché, "everyone interested in modern poetry will want to read this" and mean it. But how it will hold up is questionable. Read it now while it's current.

Lowell's *Notebook* seems a provisional book written in a provisional time. Wright's book may be just as much so, though less obvious, if one sees it, as I do, built upon *The Branch Will Not Break*. Until very recently the contemporary American poet has been struggling to find a language for immediate personal experience. Increasing awareness among writers of the external conditions of life in America and America's relation to other countries has forced poetry to come to new grips with such material. Both Wright and Lowell are trying to mediate the struggle. Both have produced better books of poetry in the past, but neither poet is over yet. What they do next may show these present books to be significant directions.

Slaughterhouse-Five, or The Children's Crusade, by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. Delacorte. \$5.95

In the opening chapter of *Slaughterhouse-Five*, Kurt Vonnegut tells us that the idea for this book came from World War II. He was a prisoner in Dresden, Germany, toward the close of the conflict, at the time when that relatively defenseless and militarily insignificant city was fire bombed so successfully (and senselessly) that 135,000 civilians were destroyed in the violent fire storm. Vonnegut decided to write about the massacre. Over the intervening years, he tried to form the story (throwing away thousands of pages in the process), and in this slim book, only one hundred and eighty-six pages, he has finally done it.

His next book, he promises, will be "fun." This one isn't. Just as we have Anti-Utopian novels, so this is a *Pilgrim's Progress* turned around, in which the anti-hero, Billy Pilgrim, does not move toward heaven. Instead, Billy loses his soul, his innocence, his psychic balance. He is a victim of the giant slaughterhouse: civilization.

As Vonnegut says, this is his "war book," but not one for a John Wayne movie. It is, rather, one to evoke

somber reflection. An excellent thing, but acrid.

Fans of Vonnegut's will find his marvelous eye for incongruities, but he lingers, throughout, on the darkest dislocations. Probably the basic paradox is the ugly disparity between our benign generalizations and the continuing carnage in places like Dresden, Viet Nam, Watts.

Don't get me (or Vonnegut) wrong. He doesn't rage. He doesn't preach. He's beyond that. When you realize that you can no more stop the slaughter than you can stop the movement of a glacier, then it is folly to rail against misery. One can only weep, quietly and compulsively, like Billy Pilgrim, or write a humorous account of a dreadful fire storm, or, even better, just shrug your verbal shoulders, like Billy Pilgrim and Vonnegut, with the curious phrase: "So it goes."

Indeed, this is not an ordinary anti-war book nor an ordinary book in any sense. For instance, Vonnegut tries to escape the linear progression of fiction by giving us, as nearly as he can, *all the moments* of Billy Pilgrim's life at once. It is post McLuhan, a *now novel*. He tries to achieve freedom from ordinary restrictions of time and place, by having Billy become "unstuck in time." As a con-

sequence, Billy moves instantly anywhere, anytime. He can be at war and back in Ilium, New York, at the same instant and in the same paragraph. He can be, at the same moment, a bewildered war prisoner and an unhappy middle-aged optometrist in post-war America.

Thus, we encounter any phase of Billy's life that serves Vonnegut's purpose. We may weep at the horror of Dresden, Hiroshima, and Viet Nam at the same time; they are all one. We may even travel with Billy to Tralfamadore, an imaginary planet, and stay for an indeterminate time, because the visit, in ordinary time, is only a flash, a micro-second.

But a more significant aspect of the book is that it so closely parallels, in several ways, Mark Twain's blacker moods. Consider, for instance, how much the novel is like Twain's *The Mysterious Stranger*—that editor's-cut-and-paste performance which, nonetheless, reveals Twain's later ideas about the human condition. Twain and Vonnegut both toy with the miraculous, with "science" fiction. Twain calls his visitor from outer space Satan, and his Satan is just as free wheeling, in space and time, as Vonnegut's Tralfamadorians.

Twain's super-spaceman shocks his earthly friends by expressing some-

thing of the same indifference to disaster as Billy Pilgrim. When Satan sees souls in the "fire storm" of hell, he is unmoved. When Satan calmly crushes hundreds of humans, he observes that it is of no matter, that people have no value. "So it goes."

In both Twain's and Vonnegut's stories, moreover, moments are inexorably pre-ordained, so structured that we are simply forced to do whatever the chain of events dictates. In fact, human beings are so completely subject to incalculable forces over which they have no control, that one should not fret about the inevitable disaster.

Both stories dwell on man's devotion to torturing his fellow man. In *Slaughterhouse-Five* are lurid details about the ancient Iron Maiden and the rack, as well as considerable discussion of more modern instruments for pain. In *The Mysterious Stranger* we have similar accounts of various forms of torture.

There are really no villains in either story. In *Slaughterhouse-Five* our vaunted equality of man amounts to little more than an equal share in villainy. Thus, we can not blame particular men—like the sordid little car thief, Paul Lazzaro—for he is only one among many. In *The Mysterious Stranger*, Satan also shies away from condemning. After all, if people are forced by circumstances into devilment, then life is already little more than a series of nightmares.

Happily, in both stories there is relief from bitterness. Satan's young earthly friends sympathize with others; Twain also gives us a young lawyer, Wilhelm, who quite genuinely loves his Marget and stands beside her when it is dangerous. Billy, too, is endowed with compassion and the capacity for love.

And, most importantly, as Satan reminds us, we can laugh at the pitiable and absurd. In much the same way, Vonnegut's darkly funny book suggests that we can counter the gloom with silent laughter.

There are other occasions in *Slaughterhouse-Five* when human beings are truly admirable. When the American prisoners were on their

way to the Dresden camp, in a closed boxcar, they "were quiet and trusting and beautiful. They shared."

And the English prisoners of war were "clean and enthusiastic," "decent and strong." They sang "bloomingly well." They had been "singing together every night for years."

There is even beauty, because Billy's first view of Dresden was "intricate and voluptuous, enchanted and absurd. It looked like a Sunday School picture of heaven . . ."

And the Talfamadorians give Billy some good advice. They teach him to "ignore the awful times," to "concentrate on the good ones." They urge him to "stare only at pretty things." While Billy can't be so admirably selective all the time, he does concentrate on such things as a sun-filled day and his love for a generous movie queen on the planet Talfamadore.

The truth is, however, that such moments are few, and Billy spends most of his days in painful indignity. "So it goes," perhaps for us all.

—Keith McKean

Hue and Cry, by James Alan McPherson. Atlantic-Little, Brown. \$5.95

Hue and Cry is a collection of ten short stories written by James Alan McPherson. The stories are written in varying length and dramatic intensity: no story in the group falls below a level of mastery of fiction. McPherson is currently teaching English and Afro-American literature at the University of Iowa. Born in Savannah in 1943, and a graduate of the Harvard Law School (1968), he brings a wealthy fund of knowledge and perception to bear in his short stories.

In reading these stories, one is reminded of the high professionalism and technical expertise of Somerset Maugham. Most of McPherson's narratives are cast in the framework of the storyteller's voice. This parallel is only partially suggestive because while it may define the technical competence of the tales, it does not do justice to the compassion and pity inherent in the themes.

McPherson declares he has tried

to see "humanity: the good, the bad, the predictable things and some things not so easily understandable or predictable." In essence, he has tried to explore some of the paradoxes of human feeling and the failures of each of us to understand the finer motives of other people. One deplores that inane cliché of "the failure of communication" because it suggests too strongly that if we verbalize sufficiently, some understanding will emerge. Verbal failures are not the stuff of McPherson's fiction, as they are not the essential stuff of man's failures. All of these stories are concerned with the dim and dying capacity of intuitive feeling of one human for another—the touch of one heart for another. E. M. Forster's theme of "only connect" is invoked again by McPherson, and the haunting ending of *Passage to India* pervades these stories. That is what the hue and cry is about.

The epigraph of this collection is taken from Pollock and Maitland's, *History of English Law*. "When a felony is committed, the hue and cry (*hutesium et clamor*) should be raised. If, for example, a man comes upon a dead body and omits to raise the hue, he commits an amerciable offense, besides laying himself open to ugly suspicions. Possibly the proper cry is 'Out! Out!'" In this collection McPherson explores the seemingly ineradicable cruelty inherent in man. The protagonists of the stories are not the victims of open and visible cruelty; the "amerciable offenses" stem from a blindness of the heart, a psychological and spiritual devaluation of people. The pain is more acute, because the crime is more devious and subtle. The blindness and shame is often self-inflicted—failures to understand one's own deepest motives or to reach out with honest love to another. Frequently, the "hue and cry" is for a personal misery, an impotence which is either not understood or for which no alleviation seems possible.

Two stories in the collection are superb renditions of this state of human misery. Previously printed in the *Atlantic*, the first story, "A Matter of Vocabulary," depicts the plight of

a young Negro boy who nightly hears the cry of a Barefoot Lady. Each night she comes to the closed and darkened undertaker establishment of Mr. Jones, and cries "Mr. Jones! I love you!" It is a lament in the night to no one. She comes always in the night to scream, because like the young Negro boy himself, she is in misery and does not know what else to do.

The final and title story is a much longer and more complex work. It renders vividly the tragedy of getting our heart's desire, only to realize too late that we desired a leaden rather than a golden thing. The vital element of this story is McPherson's dense dramatization of three young people caught in the cross-fire of giving and taking love. Although each initiates a love relationship with the paramount motive of giving, unhappiness ensues because, as McPherson rightly discerns, humans are paradoxically selfish. Of the three unhappy people in the story, McPherson attempts—however elliptically—to define the source of human failure. Of his characters, he writes: "Perhaps it is because they are alive. Perhaps it is because they once were. Perhaps it is because they have to be, I do not know." Always, the "amerciable offense" is human isolation, a failure to give one's self, without the hidden and subversive motive of gain. The misery of mankind may be self-engendered, but, if so, it is a human crime, one so immense that a "hue and cry" should be raised.

In both technique and depth of feeling, McPherson's first collection of stories is a commitment to excellence. He makes his "hue and cry" over the dead ends of life, over the sad confusions of values of his peoples. His most stirring evocations are for the bittersweet failures of sympathy and insight of those who inhabit his fictional world. The reader shares the anguish because he recognizes the truth of this imaginative world.

—Daniel J. Cahill

This Is Moscow Speaking, by Yuli Daniel. Dutton. \$4.95

Yuli Daniel, who writes under the

name Nikolai Arzhak, identifies himself as a political writer. He is now enduring a hard-labor sentence in a Russian prison camp. Were it not for these facts we would probably not have this small volume of stories.

The stories, though harmless enough from our point of view, do have political implications. The title story, "This Is Moscow Speaking," explores the implications of a mindless adherence to a political regime that demands a blood sacrifice; the story seems to conclude that one is responsible not only for his own conduct, but indirectly for that of the society as well. The other long story of the group, "Atonement," moves toward the same conclusion: that there is both individual and collective guilt when society perpetrates an injustice. "Hands," one of two shorter stories which fill out the volume, is a story of individual guilt not consciously realized. The protagonist has served the state as executioner of political prisoners; though he believes that his acts were for the good of the state, this does not save him from an emotional breakdown and debilitating physical aftereffects. The fourth story, "The Man from MINAP," is an irreverent spoof of Russian puritanism and official party pomposity. Though Daniel himself did not particularly like the story, it is good fun and without the strained effect of the other three.

"This is Moscow Speaking" is a gimmick story, but is nevertheless relatively successful. Moscow speaks and proclaims Public Murder Day, open season on anyone over sixteen. Moscow's reasons are never made clear. Anatoli Nikolayevich, the protagonist and a writer by trade, records his own reactions and those of his friends to the impending event. Aside from making some bad jokes, they think little about it. Then suddenly the implications of public murder become clearer to Anatoli when his mistress suggests they murder her husband. He is offended enough by the suggestion to want no more to do with her, but he is forced by the incident to confront the question of moral responsibility and public murder. It is a private struggle; his

friends either ignore the question or justify the decree as for the good of "our great Party." One even suggests that it is better than the old days when political murders were committed in secret. Though little happens on Public Murder Day, Anatoli does reach some personal conclusions. One cannot equate, as did a boy in the street, government decree and conscience. If one loves his country, and Anatoli insists that he does, then he is answerable for its mistakes.

"Atonement" probes with more subtlety the question of individual and societal guilt. It has no initial gimmick like the Public Murder Day of "This is Moscow Speaking," hence the reader takes it a little more seriously from the beginning. Again the narrator is a sensitive and intelligent observer of life, this time an artist called Victor Lvovich. The question he is forced to confront is the extent of the responsibility of the individual for the political imprisonments of the Stalin era. He is himself accused of having direct responsibility for the imprisonment of an old acquaintance. Though he is innocent of denouncing the man, many of his friends do not believe him and he suffers as though he were guilty. Out of his anguish comes the realization that perhaps he is guilty in a more general way, perhaps he shares responsibility for the entire political situation that fostered the mass imprisonments. Like the protagonist of "This is Moscow Speaking," he sees the state as morally culpable, and he believes that the individual citizen shares that culpability.

Though Daniel's stories are openly political and are interesting for that reason, it is also true that they are openly artistic, perhaps too much so. In both the long stories in this volume he handles his narrative well, allowing the story to unfold in the words of a sensitive and articulate protagonist. His dialogue always has substance. (It does, however, suffer in translation. Anatoli, for example, is called a "sissy" by Zoya when he refuses to help her murder her husband.) The incidents of the stories are skillfully juxtaposed; both stories move easily through time toward a

climax that grows naturally out of what has come before.

Still, Daniel tries a little too hard; his art is a little too open at times. In "This is Moscow Speaking" he uses too many devices. Aside from the unlikely contrivance of the Public Murder Day, there are poems to introduce each section, and they do not always work well. There are bottles of liquor that seem to Anatoli to be bottled emotions waiting for release. A poster depicts a scene of violence that becomes real. An old man prods Anatoli's conscience by suggesting

that animals have a morality superior to man's. Some of these devices work better than others, but there are too many of them. One senses that the writer is trying too hard, manipulating his materials until the reader wonders whether he is being manipulated as well.

Perhaps it is the social and psychological questions raised in these stories that give them life. The themes of guilt and responsibility are of interest to the American reader as well as to the Soviet court. And perhaps the stories have a special intensity

when the reader remembers that Daniel was sent to jail for writing them. But Daniel is more than a political martyr; he is a good writer as well, one who uses narrative point of view skillfully and who combines incidents into a nice unity. The reader has the sense of satisfaction that comes from a well-built story. Perhaps as Daniel becomes a little less self-conscious about his art—and one hopes he has the chance to do so—he will produce something of an even finer quality.

—Patrick A. Brooks

nora i. magid

THE KINGDOM & THE POWER

The ads for *The Times* in the New York subway show a person smiling, working, and saying, "I got my job through *The New York Times*." Now, as is clear from *The Kingdom and the Power*, by Gay Talese, at the paper itself this rarely happens. Journalism is in general a closed corporation, interviews are by connection and by invitation, and one of the few *Timesmen* to have found an ad to answer is a rather odd duck, name of McCandlish

Phillips, who is both a preaching Christian and a gifted writer. For many readers, the most startling front page story in recent years was Phillips' account of Daniel Burros, a local Nazi leader, who happened also to be a Jew, and who, after the interview, threatened Phillips' life. Between editions there was a terrible cliff-hanger, and then in a surprising turn of events, Burros instead killed himself. The incident was hair-raising, and so were the details behind it. This is from Talese's dramatic description of the end of the meeting in a dingy Brooklyn coffee shop:

Still Phillips felt a need to reach this small, miserable man who stood next to him outside the lunch-

The Kingdom and the Power, by Gay Talese. NAL-World. \$10.00

Fall 1969

73

eonette. "I'm through talking to you as reporter to subject," he said. "The interview is over. Now I want to talk to you as one human being to another." They began to walk slowly through the shadows under the train platform, and Phillips was not aware of anyone else on the streets, nor of any noise. Burros said that he felt trapped by what Phillips might print, but Phillips replied, "No, you're trapped by who you are, by everything you've got mixed into." Quoting from the New Testament, Phillips continued, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."

Burros looked up at him.

"You're trying to con me."

Phillips said that he was not. "What you have to do to break the grip fascism has on you is to call upon the name of Jesus Christ," Phillips said. "If you do that, He will take care of the rest."

As he reached the entrance to the elevated platform, Phillips shook hands with Burros. Burros turned toward his home.

The only catch to this beautifully handled and documented material is that Phillips said it first in "Times Talk" (reprinted in *THE WORKING PRESS*, Putnam, 1966); and while Talese does credit the house organ in an Author's Note, the propriety of such undeviating closeness is questionable, and makes one look at his whole approach:

Now I had before me a desperately needy person, a man who needed God with awful urgency, and right away. "I'm through talking to you as reporter to subject," I said. "The interview is over. Now I want to talk to you as one human being to another."

The sidewalks were nearly empty, or maybe I did not notice other people. We seemed to be alone as we walked slowly along under the elevated. There were many words about death. I reminded him of what the Bible says: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

"I'll take my chances on that when the time comes," he said.

The question of his entrapment came up. He said he was trapped by the threat of what I would print. "No," I said, "You're trapped by what you are, by everything you've got mixed into."

At the very end, for perhaps two minutes, he listened. I spoke very carefully, trying to reach him.

"If any man be in Christ," I said, quoting the New Testament, "he is a new creature. Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." I knew the "any man" promise was wide enough to take in even Daniel Burros.

"You're trying to con me," he said.

I said I was not. "What you have to do to break the grip Fascism has on you is to call upon the name of Jesus Christ," I said. "If you do that, He will take care of the rest." We shook hands and parted. He went off toward his home. I went up the elevated steps.

Of a speech in which Clifton Daniel once indicated an area of discord among his fellow editors, Talese writes, "This undoubtedly was a startling revelation to many readers who had never before conceived of *The New York Times'* offices in quite this way. They had probably imagined the interior of *The Times* to be closer to its prevailing image, a cathedral of quiet dignity, the home of the Good Gray Lady." I don't know what kind of naive boob as reader Talese has in mind, but it would strike me as extraordinary if any adult assumed any publication to be the by-product of a sanctuary. The wonder of the press situation is not that editors, publishers, and writers, caught in a net of serious political considerations, deadlines, and opinionated temperaments quarrel and disagree, but rather that out of this bickering, competition of interests and chaos something remarkable does come that will continue to come.

In order to set the out-in-left field reader straight, Talese, who adorned *The Times* for ten years—I for one very much looked forward to his charming and colorful pieces—has undertaken to depict its internal workings. When the initial article from which the book was developed appeared in *Esquire*, it was entitled "The Kingdoms, the Powers and the Glories of the New York Times." Over a period of two years, Talese seems to have decided that the glories were too few to bring up again, and the word has evaporated from the title and pretty much from the treatment. The royal image, however, persists. Orvil Dryfoos makes a "fortunate marriage" into the House of Ochs. Editors have dukedoms. Margaret Truman conceives of herself as an American princess. Turner Catledge who understands "that nepotism knew no limits" within the paper is finally "elevated." The Washington Bureau is "the paper's principal Embassy, and its chief [is] the Sulzbergers' ambassador to the White House." The owners are the ruling family, the dynasty, and so on.

Readers are the innocents in the picture. Working reporters are romanticized as "restless voyeurs who see the warts on the world, the imperfections in people and places . . . gloom is their game, the spectacle their passion, normality their nemesis." The institution is the enemy: it is the "fourteen-floor fact factory," that finds no man indispensable, and its instruments are the top editors, jockeying for position, not always able to protect their own men, looking for brighter writing and not always knowing it when they find it or using it when they do. Further, they are given to editing their writers. "Not all the reporters were in need of editing; indeed, there were some reporters with smooth and graceful styles that would probably be stifled under the heavy hand of a domineering desk, which usually contained its quota of frustrated writers and pedagogues."

The facts here are two: (a) over-editing does homogenize and/or kill material, and (b) this is a book that could have benefited from Theodore M. Bernstein's famous ministrations. It is marvelously lively and readable—gossip is after all irresistible—but the awkward constructions are many, and the dangling references careless and liable to misapplication; occasionally the cir-

cumlocutions are foolish, the vocabulary cheap, the affectations ("sedentary scribes") silly.

The arch villain is Clifton Daniel, who is described in terms both bitchy and snobbish. (He grew up in a small-town drugstore. Imagine.) "It is his face, which is long and pale and soft and dominated by large dark eyes and very long lashes, and his exquisitely groomed, wavy gray hair that makes him seem almost lovely." He is recalled by neighbors from childhood as having been "a little cute and fancy." His father is described as patronizing, a trait he is said to have passed on to his son. Daniel is unfeeling, a voyeur who sees much and feels little, and here innuendo enters the scene: in his private and professional life, "there would be no scandal, he would cover his tracks well." He likes jet travel, "is soothed by the tidiness of terminals (the WHAT of terminals?), the well-dressed people, the muted sounds of women's heels and soft music; he relishes the two drinks before dinner served by winsome stewardesses America's geisha girls, he once thought." The first time he met his wife (Miss Truman), he noted her shoes, her "dark blue Fontana dress with the plunging neckline, he not resisting the temptation of looking downward and being impressed with what he saw." Daniel is defined not so much in terms of function as in terms of appearance and of reaction to the appearance of others, and it is difficult for outsiders to understand how he keeps his job at *The New York Times* if he is obsessed with clothing to the point of what looks like shoe fetishism. En route to the men's room, he spots Sander Vanocur's British shoes, and "though Daniel said nothing, his mood suddenly seemed to drift and fade, perhaps back to some glorious yesteryear in his favorite city, London, and to fleeting recollections of that most adventurous time of his life." His present, *The Times*, he regards as "a vast banquet table, containing something for everybody: tidbits of trivia, roasts of political pork, morsels of mayhem, Pakistani puffs."

The problem of attribution is enormous. Talese was at *The Times* for a decade, but does not discuss his own position or his own gripes. He is efficient at saying what others are thinking, and at attaching complaints—wasted work, stifled initiative, unnecessary pressures, throat-cutting—to others; many of these are probably valid, although I doubt that he had had that much access to the inside of other people's heads. As an employer—and this is largely the topic of the book—*The Times* does have an unfortunate reputation, and entirely unparanoid people have been known to leave it because as they have put it they could not avoid the impression that someone was nipping at their heels, and that the footwork was becoming more over-riding a consideration than the actual work. But for the many who have stayed, it is a way of life, in fact *the* way of life.

Timesmen portrayed in profile are introduced by brief formula physical or cultural tags. James Reston "was a poor boy to whom America had indeed been a land of opportunity, and out of this grew a gratitude, a patriotism that made him a better convert than a critic." His seem-

ing infallibility and incorruptibility come under as many attacks as do the less attractive characteristics of others. Reston to A. M. Rosenthal (a first impression and here goes that attribution again) is the man who has everything—"success, fame, and he radiated health; he walked with the bouncing step of a winner, slightly forward and on his toes. He had a good complexion, even teeth, a full head of dark hair—a college athlete who had remained in shape, a onetime golfer now playing for higher stakes." To Allan Drury, Reston seems a "fiercely competitive individual, even when he was indisputably on top." (I must say that I find engaging a quote from Reston himself during the newspaper strike which indicates better than Talese does the nature of writing to the writer—"how do I know what I think if I can't read what I write?") Rosenthal sits in the newsroom fancying that everyone hates him: "*they must despise me*, he thought, being both irritated and saddened by the possibility, *they must really hate my guts*." When Turner Catledge tells Rosenthal that Russell Baker is to have a column, "he knew that, had he hurled a bucket of cow dung into it, Rosenthal's expression would have been about the same."

The heroes are the chaps who go to *Harper's*—David Halberstam and John Corry, "a clean-cut, outwardly bland but pleasant man of average height and build, hazel eyes and light brown hair, neat but not fastidious." Sidney Gruson, on the other hand, is "a small, wiry dapper man of forty-nine who looked about ten years younger. He had a preserved, friendly face of florid complexion, wide-set lively eyes that detracted from the bags beneath, and a full head of shiny dark hair slicked back and precisely parted." Tears are seen on varying occasions in Rosenthal's eyes and in Catledge's eyes, Lester Markel has fits of shrieking, and Catledge indulges "in the sweet urban life that the most successful of Southerners adapt to so quickly, patronizing the better restaurants, knowing all the head waiters by name, living in a large luxury apartment on the East Side where it is the New York landlords who uphold segregation, having honed it down to a fine and polished art." Harrison Salisbury is "an action addict, blurring the reality of his own personal problems while blending into the restless, competitive world of the agency man," and Charlotte Curtis (this is a quote from Halberstam) "one of the most powerful men on the paper." The Sunday Magazine is dismissed (again by Halberstam) as "*The Time's* own weakly."

For two thirds of 1966, Stanley Kauffmann was the drama critic of *The Times*. His readers divided into two camps: those who found him an exciting and provocative intellectual force, and those who thought him a flop as a newspaperman (he refused to write within the allotted time and went by arrangement to previews) and a bore as a thinker. That there was another side to the controversy, Talese never satisfactorily indicates. In his account, Kauffmann was well qualified and for various reasons martyred:

[Kauffmann] had been trained for the theater

through four years of college, had spent ten years in a repertory company devoted to classics, had written and published plays, had directed in summer theaters and elsewhere, and between 1963 and 1966 he had been the drama critic of the educational television station in New York, Channel 13 When they sought Kauffmann's own opinion of *The Times'* cultural coverage, he said frankly that it seemed like a "cultural dump," adding that it was also the opinion of the intellectual community, as he knew it, that *The Times'* critics were held in very low esteem. He excepted *The Times'* critic on architecture, Ada Louise Huxtable; its dance critic, Clive Barnes; and one of its art critics, Hilton Kramer Kauffmann's career as a *Times* man had begun on January 1, 1966, and except for minor complaints about his polysyllabisms and elliptical references, he had received only praise from the editors.

Kauffmann's own version of this appeared a year ago:

Outside of some quite minor comments about polysyllabic diction and elliptical references, I never had anything but praise from editors while I was there, and never had any kind of interference . . . I

had been trained for the theater through four years of college, had spent ten years in a repertory company devoted to classics, had written and published plays, had directed in summer theaters and elsewhere, and for the three previous years had been the drama critic of Channel 13, the educational TV station in New York I was asked my opinion of *Times* criticism, in general, as it then was. I replied that in general it seemed to me a "cultural dump." I vigorously excepted Ada Louise Huxtable, their critic of architecture, and Clive Barnes, who had just joined them as dance critic, and later, when Hilton Kramer became one of their art critics, I most certainly excepted him. Otherwise I assured all the editors who consulted me—of the daily and Sunday editions—that I and, in my experience, the intellectual community held most *Times* criticism in very low esteem.

Lucky Stanley Kauffmann. Being fired must have been painful, but he did get (a) eighteen months pay for eight months work, and (b) his story told three times: first in *New American Review* where the above appeared, then in the Talese excerpt which ran in *Harper's*, and now in the book. This time around, the source goes uncredited.

Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story, by Carlos Baker. Scribners. \$10.00

Baker has given us the most complete story yet of Hemingway's life. In a big book of over 500 pages of text and a hundred-odd pages of copious notes and sources, Baker in great detail tells the major and minor events of the writer's life. He begins at the birth, and while he does not, like *Tristram Shandy*, give us the exact moment of conception, he comes pretty close. We learn of the small boy who when asked what he was afraid of would shout defiantly, "'fraid of nothing!"

Baker catches the aggressive youth and innocence, soon to be lost, of both Hemingway and pre-World War I America. He gives a detailed description of the young writer and dozens of the expatriates who moved through post-war Paris. We see Pound's nervous friendship with the youth who comes across as half artist-half bully boy, and the constantly unsure Scott Fitzgerald, a man whom Hemingway was to alternately hurt and help throughout their long acquaintance.

We dwell on the two decades from 1925 to 1945 when Hemingway was

most completely the Hemingway of legend, both good and bad. Fame and slippery fortune, several wives, many other women, and much living filled his life as he tried to repeat the good writing of the 'Twenties, and too often settled for the magazine article that paid for the good things. The period closes with World War II when Hemingway's experiences seem alternately like the small boy "'fraid of nothing" and the man who has truly come to terms with fear itself.

The last fifteen years, those bad years relieved by fewer and fewer good moments, are handled in less detail, are compacted as if by time's winged chariot. The result suggests the same sort of effect that one gets from a Greek tragedy as the end approaches with an increasing and inevitable rush toward catastrophe. With wisdom and taste Baker stops his story with the shotgun blast that obliterated the no longer clean and well-lighted mind and heart of Ernest Hemingway.

Baker has given us the many people and events from which Hemingway created so much of his fiction. But he usually avoids speculation on the why and how of that creation, for he clearly wants to tell the story of

Hemingway's life. And too many pseudo-biographical pieces have already been gored by that bull. Hopefully, good men will find in Baker's full text and notes the material for future studies of how this writer transformed life into art. If they are working right this book will help them explore the mystery of a great writer who created a style, whose best work is so good that you sit in admiration and wonder of it—as you would sit in admiration and wonder of a great ballerina whose movements show such grace under pressure that only a pedant would ask for explanations at that moment.

The Henry James of "The Real Thing" would have understood the conflict between the artist and the man that Baker's book suggests. He would have appreciated the submission to the cruel discipline of art that marks Hemingway's best work, and the failure to submit to that discipline that scars his bad writing. For in Hemingway's best work it is the real thing that he creates and not the literal truth of facts.

Already there are charges that Baker omits this person or that event, or alters a certain situation, usually from those last sad ten years, either

out of worship of Hemingway or from his jealousy of other students of the writer. Only time can tell the validity of such charges. Certainly, future evidence can not significantly alter the record given here, for Baker's *total* picture of Hemingway, in all his good and bad moments, has that reality about it that no mere isolated fact can alter. For the present it is enough to say that Carlos Baker has written a full and readable record of the life of Ernest Hemingway.

—Robert Ward

The Moguls, by Norman Zierold. Coward-McCann. \$7.95

In *The Moguls* Norman Zierold tells the stories of the immigrant, predominantly Jewish, junk dealers, jewelers, salesmen and the like, who founded the huge film empires that dominated the film industry for so many years. The list is long and the names are impressive: Louis B. Mayer, Samuel Goldwyn, Carl Laemmle, David Selznick, Jesse Lasky, B. P. Schulberg, Cecil B. DeMille, Harry Warner, Jack and Harry Cohn, William Fox, and Darryl Zanuck. Perhaps this is why *The Moguls* sometimes seems to lack depth and focus: even 354 pages are not enough to adequately chronicle the achievements of such a remarkable group of men.

Zierold divides his book into nine chapters, each detailing the story of one of the "moguls" or the rise of one of the great studios. Taken together, they make up, he claims, "the story of complex personalities, of their achievements and blunders, of their alternating generosity and cruelty, of their moments of laughter."

The book does do this. But it does not do it as effectively as it might. Zierold often wastes his time on what seem to be non-essentials. In his chapter on Samuel Goldwyn, Zierold takes ten pages—almost a third of the entire chapter—to detail a great number of the "Goldwynisms" for which Goldwyn, a male Mrs. Malaprop, was noted. The recital is entertaining and amusing, but it does not help prove that Goldwyn was "producer of some of the best pictures of Hollywood's golden age."

Nor does a two-page list of some of the films that Goldwyn produced. No one will deny that Goldwyn occasionally mangled the English language to good effect, or that he made some of the best films turned out by Hollywood. What Zierold fails to do is show the relevance of the Goldwynisms to Goldwyn's films, nor does he go deeply into why the films were as popular and as artistically successful as some of them undoubtedly were.

There are minor errors and irritants, too. Both the text and the index mention the actor James H. Hackett (1800-1871) when they mean the famous Shakespearean actor's son James K. Hackett (1869-1926). In the chapter on "The Films' Forgotten Man," Zierold describes William Fox as a sallow-complexioned, unsmiling, bald-headed man with a prominent Jewish nose, dark, intense eyes, and a black moustache in a round face, and with a withered left arm that hung limply at his side. A photograph purporting to be of "William Fox at his Hollywood studio" shows a narrow-faced, clean-shaven, grinning man with a full head of hair, and a strong left arm holding the arm of a bathing beauty.

Aside from errors, there are things about the book that are bothersome, although they might not disturb other readers. Most serious is that Zierold seldom uses dates in telling his stories. It is often difficult to keep the chronology straight, or to determine at what stage in the development of a mogul's style a particular event took place, thus making it difficult to know what effect that event might have had. Another irritant is that the photographs are bundled together in two groupings instead of being spaced effectively throughout the text. The photographs, too, are seldom dated.

The Moguls is obviously not meant to be a scholarly dissertation. It is intended, rather, to tell an entertaining story, or series of stories, and this it does fairly effectively and pleasantly. If the reader can get past the flaws, he will find that *The Moguls* will pass his time when there isn't a good old movie on TV.

—George Glenn

The New Years, by Anne W. Simon. Knopf. \$6.95

In *The New Years*, Anne W. Simon delimits a new kind of middle age that comes upon people in their 40's, 50's and 60's, now, when our expanded scientific discoveries, productivity, extended life expectancy and improved health thrust new opportunities and problems upon them. Now, too, the youth cult flourishes and there is an insistence on the part of society—sometimes subtle, sometimes clamoring—"that it (middle age) is a time to retire from work, parenthood, sexuality and vital participation in society."

With clarity and bite the author talks about the insidious, debilitating effects of the idleness idea: the soft sell of retirement "which puts a man on the periphery when he is best equipped to be in its midst . . .," when intellectual powers such as abstract reasoning, judgment and selectivity do not decline and are in fact expanded and refined by experience.

The author challenges behavioral scientists ("It is possible that there is talent withering, wisdom shriveling . . . for the lack of knowing what it is that makes men want to work and honoring that most ordinary passion."), and she is critical of the growing retirement home complexes, really apartheid communities which she sees as contributing to a great waste of human resources, to say nothing of personal losses in feelings of involvement and usefulness.

With painstaking care and documentation, dipping liberally into research done on the aging (including the excellent studies by Bernice L. Neugarten and associates of the University of Chicago), she tallies the problems which add up to a growing wasteland where there could be continuous productivity. What comes through most emphatically is the author's respect for the human being of any age and time.

Indirectly, she encourages men and women of the newly extended middle years to see and feel their strengths and not succumb to the prevalent folklore and anxieties that pressure them to settle for a passive-receptive role in their world—for they are

equipped and needed to wisely guide the social changes through which we are hurtling. She might have added that our society could use their possibly corrective tempering of the opportunities of youth.

She calls the middle-aged "pioneers" with "compass and map of the wilderness" able to view "the process of aging clearly." She sees them as men and women who are able to order their lives to suit the new facts about getting older and seize its options. And if the author's punchy statements have an occasional zealous ring, perhaps it is because she is a vigorous, involved exponent of these new pioneers.

—*Sylvia Finkelstein*

World without Time: The Bedouin, by Edward Nevins and Theon Wright. John Day. \$8.50

It is refreshing, occasionally, to learn of someone whose action is governed by deliberate non-speed—who intensely savors the passing of time in a delicious slowness, and to whom time is more a qualitative than a quantitative phenomenon. Edward Nevins, in fact, sought what to him was an atemporal place, possessing a culture with a seeming eternity of changelessness, and to him the plodding gait of a camel was more pleasurable than the bouncing speed of a jeep.

Nevins went to eastern Jordan in February 1967 for two express reasons: to gather material on T. E. Lawrence for a friend who was preparing a psychological study of Lawrence, and, somewhat ambitiously, to uncover clues to the academic mystery of the origin of the Bedouin Arabs. The first objective was to be illumined largely by conversations with older Bedouin who had known and worked with Lawrence. The second was to be achieved by probing into Bedouin customs, given the premise that such customs had an unchanging traditional rigidity, and by pursuing the hypothesis that the Bedouin Arabs, together with the early settlers of Mesopotamia, originally had moved out of the Indian subcontinent. Proceeding with the assumption that

the early Arabian settlers maintained contact with the Tigris-Euphrates valley (as well as with the Mediterranean borderlands), Nevins sought to find the route along which such contact had been maintained. He had at his disposal evidence to suggest that a line of old wells, no longer much used, stretched from extreme eastern Jordan a long way southwards into Saudi Arabia. He hoped to locate and map these wells, and to gather any relevant tradition and lore.

With his curiosity thus aroused, the reader moves on with much expectation. He reads on, and on, and when the book is finished, he goes back to the beginning to make sure he has not misunderstood the professed objectives. He finds that he has not, for it is the co-authors who do not seem to follow them through.

Perhaps it is not altogether fair to be too disappointed. To begin with, Nevins did meet persons who reportedly had known Lawrence, and they tended to reinforce an expectation by Nevins that Lawrence had not been the important historical figure that Lawrence himself would want us to believe. (The material for the post-mortem psychoanalysis of Lawrence was passed on to the author's friend without making an appearance in this book, so that we do not really know how much of this objective was achieved.) Secondly, Nevins never made it far enough east to have a chance to look for the old wells, because his stay in Jordan was terminated by the Arab-Israeli war of June 1967, and thus he is not to be faulted for not achieving his second objective. Nevertheless we learn of the astonishingly sharp cultural distinction between the desert and the town, for to the Bedouin the political conflict had an unreal remoteness about it. We are amazed at how isolated an educated and interested person can be from the rest of the world, for Nevins really learned of the gathering storm only a week before it broke, and even then he still expected to resume his search for the wells out east.

Thus this book is useful not so much for what it was intended to be, but for what it became. Nevins has a

good eye for detail. There is an effective use of imagery, and there are frequent glimpses into Bedouin life. There is an ability to view things in a proper perspective, and unobtrusively to convey this perspective: thus, the reader does not become quizzical when he reads of "palaces" and "castles" in the desert, even though his imagination by no means takes him anywhere near a Disneyland scene. The three dozen photographs and two maps are well chosen and well used, and are placed in the text at the most appropriate places rather than all together.

One might note, on the debit side, an unconventional and inconsistent rendering of Arabic sounds, as well as an annoying (and possibly confusing) habit of equating up and down with north and south. More puzzling, however, is the apparent theme of the whole book: the hammering on the assertion of timelessness is a bit overdone, especially when the author himself says that "every *bait sha'ar* (tent), including the most humble, has its radio and gets its newcasts from Amman," and actually shows in a photograph a transistor radio inside a tent (and in another, Bedouin boys wearing baseball caps). Surely a society in which the radio is so ubiquitous cannot be so isolated, nor can it be altogether immune to outside influences.

On balance, one can say that this book affords the reader a window to the Bedouin, but not a mirror in which the Bedouin can clearly recognize himself; much as Nevins tries to be acculturated, he still speaks as one looking in from the outside rather as one from within. At the same time, this book surely will kindle a desire to learn more about, and perhaps to visit, a part of the world to most of us still obscure.

—*Basheer K. Nijim*

The Tanks of Tammuz, by Shabati Teveth. Viking. \$6.95

This is not a surprising book. The setting, the June 1967 Arab-Israeli war, is not unfamiliar. The author, an Israeli journalist, is sympathetic to the Israeli side, and as such he rein-

forces a partiality prevalent in the United States. (The recounting of developments thus becomes selective, and the interpretation of events not balanced. A military parade in Jerusalem, for instance, is described as being modest and thus of a restrained nature; yet, no mention is made of the fact that any parade at all was a violation of the armistice agreements. Syrian work on some of the headwaters of the Jordan river system is made to appear as aggressively diversionary and directly threatening to Israel's water "rights"; yet, it would have been more accurate to note that diversion of Jordan waters was initiated by Israel herself, an upper riparian relative to the Kingdom of Jordan, and that it was subsequent to this action that Arab states contemplated a diversion further upstream. Again, the withdrawal at Egypt's request of the United Nations Emergency Force from the Egyptian side of the armistice demarcation line somehow appears as a transgression against propriety; yet, we do not read that it was Israel who for ten years had steadfastly refused to permit the force to be represented on her side of the line.)

Teveth's main concern is not directly with politics but with matters military, specifically the role of Israel's Armored Corps in the Sinai thrust and to a lesser extent in the charge on the Golan Heights. In these accounts he is very good indeed. He has gathered and lucidly organized a remarkably detailed array of information on people, places, and events. Battle descriptions are vivid, and the numerous photographs and action maps make them almost visible. The cowboys-and-Indians motif is not overdone—mistakes by Israelis and acts of courage by occasional Egyptians are recounted in the same tone. This matter-of-fact reporting brings out quite effectively the stark contrast between the very high levels of morale, organization, discipline, and grass roots devotion to cause on the Israeli side, and the opposite on the other. Arabs would do well to read this book.

The tragic futility of war is poignantly exposed in the statement:

"Both doctors and orderlies were saving a man's life one minute, and the next shooting another dead." Also apparent is the essential dilemma of an exclusivist nationalism. To one Israeli general, nationalism is "the cause of wars, evil, and disaster," and yet he sees no contemporary alternative to Jewish nationalism. For its sake, he is "ready to destroy the whole world." The irony is that Israel's necessary Jewishness is itself necessarily anti-Arab, directed against those Arabs continuing to live in Israeli territory, even if the Arabs elect not to be anti-Israel.

—Basheer K. Nijim

Shakespearean Meanings, by Sigurd Burckhardt. Princeton. \$8.50

Essays on Shakespeare, Edited by Gerald W. Chapman. Princeton. \$5.00

Character and Symbol in Shakespeare's Plays, by Honor Matthews. Schocken Books. \$6.00

King Lear, more than any other Shakespeare play, is a hotly contested territory upon which a major battle is being fought between the traditionalists who regard Shakespeare as a Christian humanist and the modernists who claim Shakespeare as one of themselves. To the traditionalist, *Lear* is a magnificent if terrible theodicy; to the modernist, the play is a stark existentialist statement of the human condition. The characters in the play are ranged (as John F. Danby and others have noted) either with the Lear party, which sees nature, in the manner of Hooker, as structured and controlled by divine law, or with the Edmund party, which sees nature as amoral, in the Hobbesian manner.

In addition to the word "nature", which occurs in *Lear* more frequently than in any other Shakespeare play, the word "nothing" has elicited much attention. In fact, Professor Burckhardt's best essay in the posthumously published *Shakespearean Meanings* is his own interpretation of *Lear*, "*King Lear: The Quality of Nothing*." Burckhardt reveals a positivist's approach to language. The positivism is a weakness only when Prof. Burckhardt sometimes ignores the traditional or obvious meaning in order

to strain after the more modish or original. There is the brilliant suggestion that a significant contrast exists between Lear, the realist (in the medieval scholastic sense) who fails to admit the fatal discrepancy between the word and the deed, and Gloucester, the nominalist who suspects the validity of words. Equally perceptive is the assertion that Lear fails to realize that his ability to make *others'* actions conform to *his* words prior to his abdication lay in his royal power, not in himself. Underlying the essays in this book is the view that language has a reality of its own that is not always in accord with factual truth, and that the conscious literary artist realizes this, though he is constrained by his art to treat words as substances. Also present is the assumption that language is a creature of human society which can never be as immediate as raw experience.

Take words as current coin, as the king did, and you arrive at the same nihilistic conclusion as the subject did who denied the authenticity of words:

Make "nothing" into a substance, and you get Nothing; take it for a mere sign, and you have "nothing." Be king or subject—nothing will be the sum of your earnings. But the uncompromising logic—the logic of life and language, not of syllogisms—with which we work out or more likely let ourselves be led to this sum is, perhaps, something. Since we are dismissed into the stewardship of Edgar, we may be forgiven for covering the shame of silence with saying: "Ripeness is *all*."

The rest of the book, containing such excellent essays as "*The Merchant of Venice: The Gentle Bond*," is likewise concerned with language and society. In short, *Shakespearean Meanings* is a thoroughly modern work. One can sometimes quarrel with the author's conclusions, but cannot safely ignore them. At its worst, the author too heavily discounts whatever credence Shakespeare may have given to tra-

ditional values in his plays. There are also a few instances of hasty editing: on p. 78 and again on p. 83 the references are obviously to I Henry VI, not I Henry IV, as it is the Henry VI text that he is examining. It is the essay on "Shakespeare, Peele, and the King of Scots" in which Burckhardt is at his ingenious worst as he attempts to read the mind of Shakespeare.

The six essays, by as many authors, in *Essays on Shakespeare* were originally presented as lectures at the University of Denver during the spring of 1964. The first three are discursive and extensive surveys taking in vast areas of the Shakespeare canon, while the last three are intensive analyses of various matters in *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Hamlet*, and *King Lear*. As one would expect of such a set of essays, there is an order of merit as well as a diversity of approaches. Harry Levin's "Shakespeare's Nomenclature" is as pleasurable to read as it was no doubt delightful to hear, and proves that Shakespeare's naming of characters was no haphazard matter but rather a conscious artistic act, whenever his inveterate habit of taking material ready-made permitted. And while every intelligent reader would be interested in Robert Heilman's "The Role We Give Shakespeare," it is unlikely that anyone but a Shakespeare specialist would wish to read through J. V. Cunningham's "With That Facility": False Starts and Revisions in *Love's Labour's Lost*. Gunnar Boklund's essay, "Judgment in *Hamlet*," would appear to this reader to add no insights which Charles Williams, Wilson Knight, and others have not already provided.

Likewise with Northrop Frye's "Nature and Nothing", for all the brilliance of its presentation and a richness of allusiveness which one has come to expect of Frye. If the reader has not encountered Frye's theory of comedy elsewhere, he can acquaint himself with it here, but one feels disappointed to read that "the abdication scene [in *Lear*] establishes for us a descent into the lower order of physical nature, a descent symbo-

lized by the act of dividing the kingdom, which in itself would have led to tragedy even if Cordelia had played the role expected of her." Lear's fatal decision is *not* between humanity (either with or without Christian values) and bestiality, and the division shows a splitting of what was considered indivisible, namely kingship or sovereignty. Frye would seem to be lapsing into a medieval frame of mind by viewing the "physical" as innately evil while the "spiritual" is good. Lear's action is less a descent than a defiance, it seems to me, of the hierarchy of values and a blasphemy against the natural order; he is overwhelmed by a chaos that results after he himself has repudiated order. If Lear demands more love than is due a father and insists upon less responsibility than kingship entails, he must suffer the penalty. Yet Frye is right when he states that "Lear, like Richard, soon discovers that, as man is essentially social, any man's social context is essential to him; hence a king depriving himself of his kingship has given 'all,' and is left with 'nothing.'" Thus Frye arrives by a different route at Burckhardt's conclusion.

Maynard Mack's essay, "'We Came Crying Hither': An Essay on Some Characteristics of King Lear," is particularly good in its summary of the contrast between Lear and Gloucester, without saying precisely the same things which Burckhardt said in his contrast between the leader and the led. He writes: "In the world he creates for Lear, action is cut loose not simply from the ties that normally bind it to prior psychic causes, but from the ties that usually limit it to commensurate effects." The ultimate message of *Lear*, according to Mack, is patience, "the patience to accept the condition of being human in a scheme of things where the thunder will not peace or even begin at our bidding." Lear has to act "as if there were a moral order behind the thunder, and yet he must make this choice, if he makes it, knowing that it will never necessarily be vindicated—not at any rate, by the light of this world." Mack concludes that "we

must seek the meaning of our human fate not in what becomes of us but in what we become."

Honor Matthews' *Character and Symbol in Shakespeare's Plays* is ill-named, since it is really a tracing of "the pattern formed by the concepts of sin, judgment and redemption." In other words, she is presenting elements of the Christian faith which Shakespeare utilized in his drama. Whereas Burckhardt erred by understressing or ignoring the belief Shakespeare may have had in the Christian elements in his drama, Miss Matthews overstates it, though she admits that one can have no real way of knowing how much Shakespeare may have accepted as anything more than "the merest stock-in-trade." There is a distressing lack of any proper acknowledgment of what has been done by earlier scholars, and the writer fails to mention that much of what she traces back to the miracle and morality plays, which were still being presented in the late Sixteenth Century, could just as easily have come from the classical tradition—the conflict between appearance and reality, for example, or the tragic consequences of pride or ambition. Likewise, she does not stress heavily enough that popular history was also a source for the conflicts between justice and mercy or appearance and reality. The book has limited value as an introduction to merely one of the traditions—the medieval Christian—that Shakespeare exploited in his drama.

Lear is treated in Chapt. V, "Pardon and Punishment," and again touched upon in Chapt. VI, "The Transition." Miss Matthews concludes that "Cordelia is bound to resist Lear's demand because it is essentially an impious one. He has sought for himself the absolute devotion which is due only to God." This view should be kept in mind when reading Prof. Burckhardt's interpretation of the play. Perhaps one needs to be reminded with equal force that artistic genius should be confounded neither with religious orthodoxy nor philosophic subtlety.

—John Emory Van Domelen

The North American Review